



**This electronic thesis or dissertation has been  
downloaded from Explore Bristol Research,  
<http://research-information.bristol.ac.uk>**

*Author:*

**Kampylis, E**

*Title:*

**Aspects of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics and their Influence in Contemporary  
Compositional Practice**

**General rights**

Access to the thesis is subject to the Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International Public License. A copy of this may be found at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>. This license sets out your rights and the restrictions that apply to your access to the thesis so it is important you read this before proceeding.

**Take down policy**

Some pages of this thesis may have been removed for copyright restrictions prior to having it been deposited in Explore Bristol Research. However, if you have discovered material within the thesis that you consider to be unlawful e.g. breaches of copyright (either yours or that of a third party) or any other law, including but not limited to those relating to patent, trademark, confidentiality, data protection, obscenity, defamation, libel, then please contact [collections-metadata@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:collections-metadata@bristol.ac.uk) and include the following information in your message:

- Your contact details
- Bibliographic details for the item, including a URL
- An outline nature of the complaint

Your claim will be investigated and, where appropriate, the item in question will be removed from public view as soon as possible.

**Aspects of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics and their Influence in Contemporary  
Compositional Practice**

**Efstathios Kampylis**

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for  
award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts

University of Bristol

School of Arts

Department of Music

March 2019

word count: 15.205

Aspects of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics and their Influence in Contemporary Compositional  
Practice

### **Abstract**

My creative practice, as a European composer, is driven by a deep emotional, philosophical, and creative engagement with some principal concepts in traditional Japanese aesthetics; more specifically, the concepts of *ma* (aesthetically placed empty intervals in space and time) and *wabi-sabi* (the idea that nothing is perfect, nothing is finished, nothing is forever). A detailed analysis of the concepts of *ma*, *wabi-sabi*, and Japanese aesthetics in general is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, the purpose of this study is to examine, through the creation of new works, whether these concepts could work as aesthetic and structural fundamentals for a compositional practice that is so far removed from the world of traditional Japanese arts (where these concepts have flourished) both culturally and chronologically. I wish to investigate ways of bridging the world of Western contemporary composition with that of traditional Japanese aesthetics and communicate my ideas regarding these concepts by incorporating them into my creative practice.



Aspects of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics and their Influence in Contemporary Compositional  
Practice

### **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Neal Farwell for his invaluable guidance throughout the compositional process, research, and writing of this dissertation. His thoughtful suggestions, insightful comments and advice helped shape the direction of this thesis.

Moreover, I would like to thank Jonathan Scott for his assistance in the studio facilities and concerts at the University of Bristol.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for supporting me all these years through my academic endeavours. I offer my deepest gratitude to my parents and brother for their patience, support, and unwavering faith in me.

Aspects of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics and their Influence in Contemporary Compositional  
Practice

### **Author's Declaration**

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ..... DATE: .....

Aspects of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics and their Influence in Contemporary Compositional  
Practice

## Table of Contents

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>AUTHOR'S DECLARATION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>LIST OF WORKS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>15</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION AND COMPOSITIONAL AIMS	15
1.2 THE CONCEPT OF <i>MA</i>	16
1.3 <i>WABI-SABI</i>	20
1.4 PATHS NOT FOLLOWED AND COMPOSITIONAL OUTLINE	21
<b>CHAPTER 2: ELECTRONIC WORKS</b>	<b>24</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION	24
2.2 SOUND DIFFUSION	25
2.3 HOUSES II	27
2.4 MODULAR SYNTHESISER WORKS	29
2.5 <i>MAAI</i>	30
2.6 4 <i>YŌKAI</i>	32
<b>CHAPTER 3: <i>SHAKUHACHI</i> WORKS</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION	36
3.2 THE INSTRUMENT	38
3.3 TRADITIONAL <i>SHAKUHACHI</i> STUDY AND TRANSMISSION OF REPERTOIRE	40
3.4 THE <i>SHAKUHACHI</i> AS AN EMBODIMENT OF <i>WABI-SABI</i>	41
3.5 PERSONAL APPROACH	42
3.6 NOTATIONAL ISSUES	44
3.7 COMPOSITIONAL PLANNING	47
3.8 TRIPTYCH	50
3.9 <i>YOMI</i>	54
<b>CHAPTER 4: WORKS FOR ENSEMBLE</b>	<b>57</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION	57
4.2 <i>DAITOKU – JI'S TEA ROOM</i>	58
4.3 <i>YŪGEN</i>	59
4.4 OPEN FIELDS	62

<b>4.5</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION</b>		<b>66</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>FURTHER EXPRESSIONS OF <i>Ma</i></b>	<b>67</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>ACOUSTIC AND CULTURAL ‘MASKING’</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>		<b>72</b>

## List of Works

### 1. Houses II

(2015)

Acousmatic

Duration: 6:10

### 2. *Maai* for modular synthesiser

(2015)

Acousmatic

Duration: 6:30

### 3. 4 *Yōkai* for modular synthesiser

- *Kuchisake-onna*
- *Hone-onna*
- *Taka-onna*
- *Iso-onna*

(2016)

Acousmatic

Duration: 10:32

### 4. Triptych for solo *shakuhachi*

(2018)



Acoustic

Duration: 11:40

*Shakuhachi*: Stathis Kamylyis

**5. *Yomi* for *shakuhachi* and electronics**

(2018)

Electroacoustic

Duration: 7:15

*Shakuhachi*: Stathis Kamylyis

**6. *Daitoku* – *ji*'s Tea Room for flute, clarinet, piano, cello, and double bass**

(2016)

Acoustic

Duration: 7:40

Performed by Ensemble Variances

Flute: Anne Cartel

Clarinet: Carjez Gerretsen

Piano: Thierry Pécou

Cello: David Louwerse

Double bass: Laurène Durantel

Recorded live at the University of Bristol

**7. *Yūgen* for flute, clarinet, piano, and cello**

(2017)

Acoustic

Duration: 7:14

Performed by Ensemble Variances

Flute: Anne Cartel

Clarinet: Carjez Gerretsen

Piano: Thierry Pécou

Cello: David Louwerse

Recorded live at the University of Bristol

**8. Open Fields for *shakuhachi*, oboe, bass clarinet, piano, cello, and electronics**

(2018-2019)

Acoustic

Duration: app. 13:00

The piece has not been performed yet.

Aspects of Traditional Japanese Aesthetics and their Influence in Contemporary Compositional  
Practice

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction and compositional aims

My compositional research, as a western European, is driven by a deep emotional, philosophical, and creative engagement with some central concepts in traditional Japanese aesthetics. My engagement as a teenager with traditional Japanese martial arts introduced me to other traditional Japanese artistic practices such as the monochromatic ink wash paintings called *sumi-e* and the poetic form *haiku*. Through them, I got in touch with an aesthetic universe so radically different to the world of Western aesthetics I was brought up on. These aesthetic concepts were so appealing to me that they began through the years to influence my way of thinking and subsequently, my artistic practice as a composer and performer. It will be helpful to begin with a depiction of these ideas (specifically the concepts of *ma* and *wabi-sabi*), in order to introduce discussion of their detailed consequences in my music and the larger choices made in my creative trajectory.

The traditional Japanese aesthetic concepts of *ma* and *wabi-sabi*, although extremely rich in implicit meaning, have proved very slippery and elusive in definition. Being in an academic environment, I faced the challenge of providing details and definitions for notions that I could feel but was not always able to explain. Moreover, the completion of a practice-led PhD compelled me to analyse and theorise creative techniques and procedures that I would have normally allowed to be completely intuitive. A detailed analysis of the concepts of *ma*, *wabi-sabi*, and Japanese aesthetics in general is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, the

purpose of my research is to investigate ways of communicating my ideas regarding these concepts by incorporating them into my creative practice; a creative practice that although heavily inspired by, lies outside the context of Japanese culture where the notions of *ma* and *wabi-sabi* have flourished. I wish to create works that feel new and ‘fresh’ during each new performance and/or recording of them, while at the same time being able to preserve their sonic identity and ‘spirit’; works that will invite rather than convey interpretations of meaning. Through the creation of new works, I will attempt to examine whether the concepts of *ma* and *wabi-sabi* could work as aesthetic and structural fundamentals for my compositional practice, despite that practice being so far removed from the world of traditional Japanese arts both culturally and chronologically. I am perfectly aware that removing these concepts from their native setting could change some of their qualities; some of their subtle nuances might get lost in the way, but perhaps something new might be gained.

## 1.2 The concept of *Ma*

In Japanese tradition, *ma* is an aesthetically placed empty interval in space and time. The written word *ma* is the combination of two Chinese characters: The outer one means gate or door (*mon*) and the inner one sun (*hi*) or moon (*tsuki*); combined, the two characters create the visual image of a ‘light shining through a gate or door’.<sup>1</sup> While the word *ma* is understood in the Western world as negative or empty space, the complexity of the concept lies in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard B. Pilgrim, ‘Intervals (“Ma”) in Space and Time: Foundations for a Religio-Aesthetic Paradigm in Japan, *History of Religions*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 255-277 (p. 258).

fact that in Japanese tradition, space and time are conceived of as a fusion of spatial and temporal experiences; experiencing time is a space-structured process and experiencing space is a time-structured one. A noteworthy example in the context of architecture is the use of the stepping stones, called *tobi-ishi* (literarily: ‘skipping stones’), to create paths in traditional Japanese stroll gardens. The sophisticated spacing of the stones (the empty space between consecutive stepping stones as an expression of *ma*) can be used to regulate not only the direction of movement, but also the walker’s speed; thus, the time needed to walk the garden path. As a result, the visitors’ visual and auditory input – hence their experience of the place – is manipulated not merely by spatial phenomena, but it is also structured over time.<sup>2</sup>

*Ma* as an aesthetic concept, being fundamentally different from the Western concept of sequentially ordered space and time, is capable of merging ideas, concepts, and experiences that can be usually placed either in space or in time and also bridge the boundaries between religion and culture, traditional and contemporary. More importantly, these empty intervals of space and time are always perceived as invitations to some sort of action, and in traditional Japanese art, *ma* became the means for inviting the spectator to become an active participant in the artwork by filling these empty intervals with meaning. A concrete example of this can be found in the *Nō* drama, which according to contemporary *Nō* actor and author Komparu Kunio is ‘the art of *ma*’.<sup>3</sup> The most powerful moments of a *Nō* play are the ones of ‘no-action’ that can be found between the dialogue, miming, dancing, and singing parts of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Günter Nitschke, *From Shinto to Ando: Studies in Architectural Anthropology in Japan*, (London: Academie Editions, 1993), p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Kunio Komparu, *The Noh Theatre: Principles and Perspectives*, (John Weatherhill Inc., 1983), p. 70.

play. What renders these intervals without action so important and also so enjoyable is the ability of the actor to hold the attention due to his<sup>4</sup> underlying spiritual strength. Eventually, narrative, acting, music, and movement surrender to something more profound that emerges through the gaps between those acts.

The word *ma* carries not only objective but also subjective meaning: the objective location is in the describable four-dimensional world (i.e. space and time), and the subjective is the experience of that world. According to the German architect Günter Nitschke, *ma* includes not only form/non-form and the continuity of space and time, but it also has to do with human experience. *Ma* for Nitschke is ‘the simultaneous awareness of the intellectual concepts form + non-form, object + space, coupled with subjective experience; it is the thing that takes place in the imagination of the human who experiences these elements. Therefore, one could define *ma* as experiential place.’<sup>5</sup> By collapsing the boundaries between the objective and subjective worlds, and even between space and time, *ma* becomes a ‘between world’,<sup>6</sup> something that conveys ‘a metaphysical aesthetic’,<sup>7</sup> and eventually a very specific way of thinking about and experiencing the world.

---

<sup>4</sup> In *Nō* theatre male actors play both male and female roles.

<sup>5</sup> Günter Nitschke, ‘Ma: The Japanese Sense of “Place” in Old and New Architecture and Planning’, *Architectural Design*, 3 (1966), 113-156 (p. 152).

<sup>6</sup> Pilgrim, p. 268.

<sup>7</sup> Tōru Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selective Readings*, trans. and ed. by Yoshiko Kakudo and Glenn Glasow (Berkeley: Fallen Leaf press, 1995), p.56.

In the realm of music composition, the use of *ma* can create and distribute sounds in space and time that take on meaning not through the composer, but through the acts of the performers and listeners.<sup>8</sup> I decided to focus on three expressions of *ma* that I believe have some relevance to the compositional and performance process:

- 1) **Empty intervals defined by objects in space:** the spatial separation of sound sources creates not only contrast, but also an active space that invites contemplation and action. The sound sources themselves do not imply something specific; the listener has to participate actively in the space created by them in order to fill it with meaning.
- 2) **Bridges between worlds:** *ma*, as a ‘between world’ that collapses the boundaries between the objective and subjective/space and time, can also act as a bridge between different sound and cultural worlds, a bridge that invites the listener to cross it.
- 3) **Pauses between consecutive sonic events:** *ma* is realised as intervals of silence between sounds; ‘an unquantifiable metaphysical space (duration) of dynamically tensed absence of sound’.<sup>9</sup> These pregnant nothings remind the listeners that the silent parts of a piece demand from them action as well.

---

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Lee Chenette, ‘The Concept of Ma and the Music of Takemitsu’ (Grinnell: Grinnell College, 1985), in *Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshukan, North America* <<http://www.kskna.com/media/articles>>, [accessed 6 June 2018] (p. 6).

<sup>9</sup> Tōru Takemitsu, ‘One Sound’, trans. Hugh de Ferranti, *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 8, part 2 (1994) 3-4, (p.4).



### 1.3 *Wabi-Sabi*

*Sabi* means something that has aged well – but also carries the sense of tranquil solitude as expressed in the haiku of the famous Japanese poet of the seventeenth century Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) – and *wabi* conveys the meaning of simple, austere, understated beauty.<sup>10</sup>

Through the ages, the meanings of the words *sabi* and *wabi* became so interchangeable that, nowadays, the line separating the two terms has become indistinct even for Japanese scholars and often the term *wabi-sabi* is used instead.<sup>11</sup> The teachings of *Zen* Buddhism and the observation of nature moulded the core of *wabi-sabi* as an aesthetic ideal: all things are impermanent, all things are imperfect, all things are incomplete.<sup>12</sup> *Wabi-sabi* stands opposite to the monumental, enduring Western idea of beauty; it exists in the inconspicuous, the overlooked, the ephemeral. Simplicity, irregularity, suggestion, intimacy, and impermanence gradually became the main ingredients of *wabi-sabi* and of traditional Japanese taste in general.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, the beauty of *wabi-sabi* is not something inherent in things; it is a perceptual event.<sup>14</sup> *Wabi-sabi* does not exist, it ‘happens’ and in order for it to ‘happen’, the

---

<sup>10</sup> Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Culture*, (Kyoto: The Eastern Buddhist Society, Otani Buddhist College, 1938), pp. 137-151.

<sup>11</sup> Leonard Koren, *Wabi-Sabi: Further Thoughts*, (California: Imperfect Publishing, 2005), pp. 33-35.

<sup>12</sup> Leonard Koren, *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets and Philosophers*, (California: Imperfect Publishing, 1994), p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Donald Richie, *A Tractate on Japanese Aesthetics*, (Berkeley, California: Stone Bridge Press, 2007), p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Koren, *Wabi-Sabi: Further Thoughts*, p. 57.

observer has to distance herself from her habituated ways of looking at things: she must defamiliarise the familiar. Only then can someone experience the elegant poverty<sup>15</sup> of *wabi-sabi*.

#### 1.4 Paths not followed and compositional outline

Although my research was from the beginning very much influenced by the aesthetic concepts described above, my main focus during the first eighteen months of my doctoral studies was – informed by my interest in John Cage’s teachings and compositional techniques – the exploration of chance operations and indeterminacy in the creation and performance of electronic and electroacoustic compositions. An essential studio and performance tool during that period was an EEG (electroencephalogram) headset paired with a laptop running Max/MSP or a modular synthesiser system. An EEG headset makes use of a number of electrodes placed on the scalp in order to measure the electrical activity of the brain;<sup>16</sup> more specifically, the levels of the various brainwave bands (delta, theta, low and high alpha, low and high beta, gamma). I was using the aforementioned headset as a multiple-output, real-time random numbers generator (as part of an EEG musification system that is mapping EEG

---

<sup>15</sup> The word ‘poverty’ in this context refers to the *Zen* mindset of non-attachment called *mushin* (literary: ‘no-mind’) i.e., not been attached to fixed ideas or material objects, thus be open to everything.

<sup>16</sup> Ramaswamy Palaniappan, ‘Electroencephalogram-based Brain-Computer Interface: An Introduction’, in *Guide to Brain-Computer Music Interfacing*, ed. by Eduardo Reck Miranda and Julien Castet (London: Springer, 2014), pp. 29-41 (p. 31).

information to musical parameters<sup>17)</sup> and I created a number of works for solo instruments and live electronics or ‘brain performer’ and live electronics that were performed in various conferences and festivals like the 21<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Auditory Display, the 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Computer Music Multidisciplinary Research, the 1<sup>st</sup> International Workshop on Brain-Computer Music Interfacing, the 2016 Diffrazioni Multimedia Festival, as well as at the Music Department of Bristol University.

During the performance of these works, the performer is wearing the EEG head-set which sends her continuously changing brainwave band levels to a Max/MSP or modular synthesiser patch where they are scaled and mapped accordingly in order for the live electronics part of each work to be created. These levels, acting as streams of random numbers, are altering/modulating various parameters of the patch in a random but controlled way, creating an electronics part that although recognisable during every new performance of the respective work, it is never exactly the same. I was focusing my investigation on this fascinating neurofeedback loop that is created during the performance of these works: the brain activity of the performer is influencing the music, and at the same time the music is influencing the performer’s brain activity. For the next stage of this research, I was planning on using the EEG headset not only for the creation but also for the live spatialisation of my works.

Towards the end of the second year of my research studies and despite its prolific output, I decided to set aside this path for various reasons. The NeuroSky EEG headset I was using,

---

<sup>17</sup> Joel Eaton, Eduardo Reck Miranda, ‘On Mapping EEG Information into Music’ in *Guide to Brain-Computer Music Interfacing*, ed. by Eduardo Reck Miranda and Julien Castet (London: Springer, 2014), pp. 221-254 (p. 227).

although very reliable and compact-sized (its small size and weight were ideal for live performance), was an entry-level product, thus of limited capabilities. In order to continue my research, higher quality equipment was needed, and that was not an option due to financial reasons. More importantly, as I was getting further engaged with the study of traditional Japanese aesthetics and especially with the investigation of the various expressions of the concept of *ma* and the aesthetic influence of *wabi-sabi* in my work – both of which eventually became the focal point of my research –, I felt that focusing on one primary creative tool and only specific categories of works (electronic and electroacoustic) was quite limiting. My engagement with EEG equipment necessitated a significant amount of time dedicated to the study of various concepts of neuroscience, as well as programming techniques that although very interesting (and potentially useful in my future research and output as a composer), would eventually deprive me the time I wanted to allocate to the study of traditional Japanese aesthetic concepts. Moreover, my creative output as a composer includes electronic, electroacoustic, and acoustic works so it was imperative for me to explore the ways these aesthetic concepts may or may not be able to – aesthetically and structurally – influence all three categories of works. Finally, I realised that despite how interesting as a concept the neuro-feedback loop discussed above might be, there is a lack of audible connection between the live EEG data and the musical result, i.e., by using a number of software pseudo-random number generators instead, I could generate similar musical results.

Initially, I focused on the creation of ensemble (‘Daitoku – Ji’s Tea Room’ and ‘Yūgen’) and electronic works (‘Houses II’, ‘Maai’, and ‘4Yōkai’) before I moved to composing electroacoustic pieces where I could combine the two sonic worlds. In the meantime, during

the last year of my research, I made the decision to introduce into my sonic arsenal the *shakuhachi*, creating a solo ('Triptych') and an electroacoustic piece ('Yomi') for that instrument. Bridging the world of contemporary Western composition with that of traditional Japanese aesthetics is not an easy task. Making use of the *shakuhachi* – an instrument that is not only strongly associated with traditional Japanese music and culture but also a true embodiment of traditional Japanese aesthetics – as a creative tool, helped me gain a more in-depth insight into the world of traditional Japanese aesthetics and the ways I could potentially incorporate them into my compositional process. Finally, after my investigation of whether the concepts of *ma* and *wabi-sabi* could work as aesthetic and structural fundamentals in electronic, *shakuhachi*, and ensemble works had reached a certain point, it felt necessary to create a summative work ('Open Fields') for my portfolio that by combining all three creative forces, would bring together all the compositional ideas and techniques applied so far. I made the conscious decision not to include works for larger forces (such as an orchestral piece) in my portfolio and focus only on solo and ensemble pieces for reasons explained in the last chapter of this thesis.

## **Chapter 2: Electronic works**

### **2.1 Introduction**

When I decided to focus my research on the study of traditional Japanese aesthetic concepts, I felt that the creation of electronic works would be the best starting point. Electronic

composition as a discipline, is possibly the most far removed of all three from the world of traditional Japanese aesthetics, thus the most challenging category of works to investigate whether these concepts could potentially work as aesthetic and structural fundamentals. American artist, aesthetics expert, and writer Leonard Koren (1948- ) has expressed his doubts about whether it is possible for *wabi-sabi* to exist in the digital world due to ideological and ontological incompatibilities.<sup>18</sup> According to Koren, *wabi-sabi* is based on the interaction of real things in the real world and is itself ‘infinite information’<sup>19</sup>; a continuum that cannot occur in the binary structure of the digital domain. It is true that the recording of the material for my electronic compositions, as well as its processing and mixing, took place in a digital audio environment; a place where perhaps *wabi-sabi* cannot exist. But on the other hand, it is in the sound sources, the creative tools and techniques, and the live spatialisation of my electronic works where the listener can eventually experience the poetry of *wabi-sabi* and the various manifestations of the concept of *ma*. Thus, even though the digital world does not ‘meet the standards of actual-ness, “completeness” or verisimilitude necessary to support *wabi-sabi*’<sup>20</sup>, does it really matter?

## 2.2 Sound diffusion

When I had to choose the format of my electronic works, I made the decision to create solely stereo works and not multichannel ones. I deem performance a necessary part of my

---

<sup>18</sup> Koren, *Wabi-Sabi: Further Thoughts*, p. 65.

<sup>19</sup> Koren, *Wabi-Sabi: Further Thoughts*, p. 67.

<sup>20</sup> Koren, *Wabi-Sabi: Further Thoughts*, p. 71.

electronic works, and sound (stereo) diffusion as a performance practice was for me a natural realisation of this performance attitude. Fixed multichannel works embody a certain degree of fixity that seems to contradict with my aesthetic approach and aims. Although it is quite common for a composer to make adjustments to the relative level and equalisation of each channel during the performance of a fixed multichannel work, these adjustments are of a more corrective and less expressive nature. Additionally, stereo diffusion is not tied to a specific speaker set-up/configuration, and that makes it a very flexible performing strategy capable of making the most out of any given set-up and performance space.

The process of decoding an electronic medium is never transparent:<sup>21</sup> no set of loudspeakers is an absolutely neutral and transparent conveyor of sound material,<sup>22</sup> and the position of each listener along with the acoustic qualities of the listening space can affect the perception of an acousmatic work. This lack of decoding transparency bestows an extra degree of indeterminacy to a fixed media work that is more than welcome in my compositional practice, and I consider the act of transference from my compositional space to any listening space an integral part of my electronic works: stereo diffusion, as an act of performance interpretation, works as a bridge between these two worlds. This bridging of the compositional and listening space may have a negative or positive impact on an acousmatic work; sometimes the acoustic qualities of a space can obstruct certain sonic qualities of the

---

<sup>21</sup> Adam Stansbie, 'Beyond the Fixity Fallacy: Rethinking the Work-Concept in an Age of Electronic Music', *Music and Sonic Art: Practices and Theories*. (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> Scott Wilson and Jonty Harrison, 'Rethinking the BEAST: Recent Developments in Multichannel Composition at Birmingham ElectroAcoustic Sound Theatre', *Organised Sound*, 15.3 (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 239–250 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1355771810000312> (p. 240).

work, but on the other hand, other qualities may be enhanced. In both cases, the act of stereo diffusion creates opportunities waiting to be exploited.

### 2.3 Houses II

Electromagnetic field sonification

Duration: 6:10

Our households and workplaces are bursting with electromagnetic radiation as a result of the use of numerous electronic devices. Although constantly present, electromagnetic radiation is inaudible. ‘Houses’ is a series of five electronic works that make use of electromagnetic field sonification recordings as their sonic material and they are influenced by the work of German composer Christina Kubisch (1948- ), particularly by her “Electrical Walks”<sup>23</sup> series of works. Sonification is ‘the use of non-speech audio to convey information. More specifically, sonification is the transformation of data relations into perceived relations in an acoustic signal for the purposes of facilitating communication or interpretation’.<sup>24</sup> The output sound

---

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.christinakubisch.de/en/works/electrical\\_walks](http://www.christinakubisch.de/en/works/electrical_walks)

<sup>24</sup> Gregory Kramer and others, *Sonification Report: Status of the Field and Research Agenda* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, Faculty Publications, Department of Psychology, 2010) <<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/psychfacpub/444>> [accessed 7 January 2019] (p. 3).



reflects properties/relations of the input data and the whole procedure should be reproducible, i.e. ‘given the same data and identical interactions/triggers the resulting sound has to be structurally identical’.<sup>25</sup> By making use of a stereo set of induction coil pick-ups coupled with a high-quality amplifier and a handheld recorder, I managed to transform the electromagnetic radiation emitted from various electronic devices into audible sound. The recordings were then edited, processed, and mixed in a digital environment. These five works explore the inaudible world of electromagnetic fields and as a bridge between worlds, introduce it to our every-day soundscape.

The original idea for the ‘Houses’ series was to produce electromagnetic field sonification recordings from five different households using a variety of available sources: from electronic cigarettes to desktop computers and employ them to create one piece for each house. Soon, I came to realise that the recordings from similar devices, especially when it comes to not very structurally complicated ones (like microwave ovens for example), have similar sound. That made me alter my original plan ending up keeping only a selection comprising the eleven most sonically interesting ones. I decided to use only one recording from each type of electronic device, so I ended up with eleven recordings from eleven different devices. Each one of the five pieces in the series makes use of only a small number of these recordings (two to five), in different combinations, as its sonic material, and I tried to use each one of the eleven recordings at least once.

---

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Hermann, ‘Taxonomy and definitions for Sonification and Auditory Display’ in 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference for Auditory Display (2008)  
<<https://smartech.gatech.edu/handle/1853/49960>> [accessed 7 January 2019] (p. 2).

By changing my original idea for the ‘Houses’ series, I felt that the whole project shifted from a solid five-part concept that could justify its fairly long duration (approximately 45 minutes in total) into a set of variant iterations around the same concept. I am quite satisfied with each one of the five pieces individually but cumulatively, I doubt they can work as a comprehensible whole. Therefore, I decided to include only the second piece of the series into my portfolio as I believe it is the most well-executed, hence the most representative one. The original electromagnetic field sonification recordings are distorted, dense, and ‘glitchy’-sounding by nature, so I decided to use two types of transformation in order to mould them in an electronic work; these two contrasting processes are reflected on the first and second half of ‘Houses II’ respectively. For the first part, I kept the harsh/distorted element of the recordings and tried to grant it a musical function by transforming it into a series of discreet harsh-sounding sporadic utterances. Subsequently, harshness gives its place to the element of high density, which is translated into slow-moving textures/sound masses that monopolise the second half of the work. The final gestures of the work are an interplay between the two aforementioned sonic states that work as a recapitulation or echo of what the listener has experienced so far.

## **2.4 Modular synthesiser works**

In various of my works, I make use of a small modular system. The choice of the modules in the particular system is focused on experimental/sound design applications and not on a specific type of synthesis (abstractive, additive, FM, etc.). I could possibly replicate the functions of each module in a software environment like Max/MSP or Reaktor instead of

using a hardware setup, especially a limited one. Nevertheless, having limited recourses allows me to get to know in depth the characteristics and capabilities of each module, determine the sonic possibilities of this setup, and compels me to discover creative ways to overcome its limitations.

A modular synthesiser has an ‘organic’ feeling, not in terms of sound necessarily, but in the way the user performs on it. Even if the user is very familiar with his or her system, there is always the possibility of ‘sonic accidents’ that give the user the opportunity to follow a creative path completely different to the one she had planned. After a patch is created, the moment someone unplugs the patch cables, the sound is gone forever. Even if someone tries to recreate the patch by plugging in the cables in the same way and turning the knobs to the exact same settings, the sound will most probably be not exactly the same, for modular synthesisers, due to their analogue circuitry,<sup>26</sup> are very sensitive to temperature and humidity changes. The impermanence, imperfections, and open format of the modular synthesizer embody, to my mind, the spirit of *wabi-sabi*, thus rendering it a suitable addition to my sonic arsenal.

## 2.5 *Maai*

For modular synthesiser

Duration: 6:30

---

<sup>26</sup> Nowadays there are numerous digital modules available in the market that are far more stable and resistant to environmental changes than the analogue ones. Nevertheless, the system I used for the creation of my works consists mainly from analogue modules.

*Maai* is a traditional Japanese martial arts term referring to the space (engagement distance) between two opponents in combat. While the word *maai* is usually translated in English as interval or distance, the complexity of the concept lies in the fact that in Japanese tradition, space and time are conceived of in the same way (as a fusion of spatial and temporal experiences). Thus, although in physical terms the word *maai* expresses the actual distance between the two opponents, in temporal terms, *maai* represents the time it takes for each contestant to cover that distance. The merging of the two domains bestows on the term the meaning of the momentary lapses of awareness in the opponent's mind that are manifested as a loss of advantage. As a result, even if the physical distance between two opponents is mutually advantageous, and both can cover that distance equally quickly, the clash of the mental intervals between the two opponents will determine the winner.<sup>27</sup>

The piece is a sonic representation of a *kendo* (traditional Japanese fencing) duel; more specifically, of the very first strike of the fight expressed as the mental interval clash between the two opponents. That first strike, being successful or not, is an event or gesture that in real time lasts most probably less than one second. In this piece, it is stretched to several minutes as we move from the outer/physical world into the inner/mental one. '*Maai*' is constructed entirely from self-generating patches, i.e. patches that make use of several 'random generator' modules of different types that modulate/alter various parameters in real time. As a result, the sound of each patch changes/evolves constantly and unpredictably, although

---

<sup>27</sup> Noma Hisashi, *The Kendo Reader*, Transl. Nordes Kendoforbund (2003)  
<<http://www.osi.uio.no/kendo/pdf/Noma.pdf>> [accessed 03 August 2016]

within certain, well-defined limits. The recordings of the aforementioned patches were subsequently edited, processed, and mixed in a digital environment.

## 2.6 4 *Yōkai*

Four miniatures for modular synthesiser

Duration: 10:32

*Yōkai* are supernatural creatures, monsters, and spirits in Japanese folklore that in most cases, are mischievous and malevolent entities. Many *yōkai* appear mostly human, with others having animal features or even resembling inanimate objects. They have supernatural powers with shapeshifting being the most common one. ‘4 *Yōkai*’ is a set of four electronic miniatures created with a modular synthesiser and inspired by the following four female (*onna*) *yōkai*:

***Kuchisake-onna* (slit-mouthed woman):** In Japanese folklore, the spirits of the dead that were killed in extremely violent ways do not rest properly and most often return to the land of the living seeking vengeance. *Kuchisake-onna* is one of them and her name derives from a deep cut on her mouth that runs from ear to ear. She appears to lone travellers at night, her mutilated mouth covered with a fan and asking them if they think she is beautiful. If the victim answers yes, she removes the fan and reveals her slit mouth, asking her victims if they still believe she is beautiful. If they say no, she slits their mouth from ear to ear to resemble

hers. If the victim lies and answers yes for the second time, she walks away only to return to the victim's house the same night and kill him brutally in his sleep.<sup>28</sup>

***Hone-onna (bone woman):*** At night, these corpses of young women will rise from the dead and walk to the home of their former lover. They are driven by an undying love despite the fact they are long dead. They appear as young and beautiful as they did when they were alive and only people with strong religious faith can see their true nature: rotting, skeletal corpses. At first, her appearance comes as a great shock to her lover but that quickly turns into blinding joy. *Hone-onna* will spend the night at her lover's house only to leave first thing in the morning. As her corpse decays further, her appeal grows stronger and the coupling continues for days or even weeks. With every visit, the ghost drains a part of her lover's life force, who grows weaker every night and eventually dies, joining his lover forever in the underworld.<sup>29</sup>

***Taka-onna (tall woman):*** *Taka-onna* are one of the numerous types of *yōkai* that frequent the red-light districts of Japanese cities. They look like ordinary women, but they are able to elongate their torsos several meters in length. Every *taka-onna* was once a regular woman who was too unattractive to find a husband or a job at the red-light districts. Their jealousy and bitterness slowly corrupted them and turned them into monsters. They are usually harmless but enjoy scaring the customers of brothels by elongating their bodies and peeping

---

<sup>28</sup> Matthew Meyer, *Kuchisake-onna*, (2011) <<https://www.yokai.com>> [accessed 04 July 2018]

<sup>29</sup> Matthew Meyer, *Hone-onna*, (2011) <<https://www.yokai.com>> [accessed 04 July 2018]

into their second-floor windows, jealous of the physical pleasure they were never able to experience themselves.<sup>30</sup>

***Iso-onna* (coast woman):** *Iso-onna* are vampires that wander the rocky beaches of the Western part of Japan, preying on fishermen and travellers to feed upon them. They usually resemble tremendously beautiful women with very long black hair, who appear to have just come out of the sea, dripping wet. When a passenger approaches, *iso-onna* lets out an ear-piercing scream that stuns her victims, then drags them into the sea where she drains their blood using her long hair. Alternatively, *iso-onna* sit on the cliffs calling out to passers-by with their eerie voices. Mesmerised, the victims walk off the cliffs falling to their deaths, allowing the *iso-onna* to feed upon their dead bodies.<sup>31</sup>

‘4 *Yōkai*’ is a set of four electronic miniatures with no specific order (for the purpose of this commentary they are presented in chronological order) that share the same rhetoric of harsh/distorted foreground gestures against a sustained, slow evolving background pedal/atmosphere, both placed in a heavy reverberant space. The foreground gestures, ‘rough’, fast-moving, and explicit in nature, symbolise the respective *yōkai*; her terrifying appearance, her violent delights, and the ghastly actions she inflicts on her victims. These distorted gestural outbursts often have a spasmodic spatial motion and somehow unresolved function. They appear direct, ‘dirty’, and confusing, very much like the distressing nature of the *yōkai* they represent. On the other hand, the ‘mellow’, slow-moving, almost implicit in

---

<sup>30</sup> Matthew Meyer, *Taka-onna*, (2011) <<https://www.yokai.com>> [accessed 04 July 2018]

<sup>31</sup> Matthew Meyer, *Iso-onna*, (2011) <<https://www.yokai.com>> [accessed 04 July 2018]

nature background pedal acts as an indicator of the eerie setting each story takes place: from the misty, rocky coasts of Western Japan to the dark, ominous alleys of Tokyo.

On a larger scale, this bold contrast between the two sonic groups also signifies the world of the spirits placed against the world of the living. According to Japanese folklore, under certain circumstances, the veil that separates the two worlds can grow thinner and at that moment, spirits and supernatural beings get the opportunity to cross over. Although I strived to keep the two sonic worlds as separate as possible in order to emphasise their differences, I wished to include a sonic element into these four miniatures that would denote that specific moment and act as a bridge between the two worlds. The heavy reverberant space that the foreground gestures and background pedal are placed in serves that purpose by acting as a signifier of the moment when these two overlapping but independent worlds are momentarily linked and being a digital empty space that acts as a bridge between worlds, becomes a fitting example of *ma*.



### **Chapter 3: *Shakuhachi* works**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

I am interested in and have studied traditional Japanese aesthetics for a long time now. The moment I began to learn how to play the *shakuhachi*, I realised that the instrument itself is an embodiment of those aesthetics and could potentially work as a vehicle for a better understanding of their application to music. Traditionally, that embodiment also involves a deep, long-term apprenticeship with the instrument; something that personally have not had the opportunity to pursue so far. Conscious of that lack, I have sought to acquire access to that ‘embodied’ richness through sustained self-study of the instrument. Learning how to play a non-Western instrument in the absence of a tutor created an implicit tension that ultimately proved highly productive for my aesthetic investigation, focused through the creation of two new works for *shakuhachi*.

Although very simple in construction, the *shakuhachi* has a truly impressive sonic agility. Listening to pieces written hundreds of years ago, one can notice the plethora of what in Western art music is called extended techniques. Although something relatively new in Western music, extended techniques have been common practice in Japanese wind and string instruments’ performance for hundreds of years now. But whereas they have been primarily used as a means to produce new sounds from the instrument or merely as virtuosic devices by Western musicians, in Japanese traditional music, these techniques play an important

structural role in the performance of the repertoire by supporting the programmatic nature of each work.<sup>32</sup>

While listening to *shakuhachi* music and traditional Japanese music in general, what struck me the most was the difference between Western classical and traditional Japanese music when it comes to sound ideals. In Western ensemble and orchestral music, the composer carefully selects and merges different instrumental sounds in order to create a unique, unified sound colour. Traditional Japanese chamber music seems to aim to achieve the opposite effect; no matter how small or big the ensemble is, the timbre of each individual instrument should be heard clearly. The multilinear nature of traditional Japanese music clearly supports this effect, especially in small ensembles like the *sankyoku* ensemble (*shakuhachi*, *koto*, and *samisen*), but surprisingly enough, this tone colour separation is evident even in relatively big ensembles consisting of a large number of different instruments like the *gagaku* (imperial court music, lit: ‘elegant music’) ensemble.

Another example is the construction of Japanese instruments itself. Through the ages, the manufacture of Western orchestral instruments has evolved in order to achieve durability and most importantly, as much tone stability and homogeneity throughout the whole range of the instrument as possible. For Japanese instrument makers and performers, the instrument’s imperfections are not a disadvantage. On the contrary, it is exactly what plays the most important role to the instrument’s unique character. The *shakuhachi*, for example, has five

---

<sup>32</sup> Amy D. Simon, ‘Western Extended Techniques in Traditional Japanese Wind Performance: Gagaku Kangen and Shakuhachi Honkyoku’ (doctoral Thesis. York University, Toronto, Ontario, 2014) <<https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/28206>> [accessed 17 August 2017] p. 1.

finger holes, and it is tuned to the minor pentatonic scale (D-F-G-A-C on a 1.8 *shaku* instrument for example). In order to produce the rest of the chromatic scale, the performer can either partially cover finger holes, or use the traditional *meri* and *kari* techniques. When performing a *meri*, the player draws the chin in, bringing the lips closer to the blowing edge in order to bend the pitch downwards. The *kari* technique is the opposite gesture and bends the pitch upwards. In both cases, the chin movement is complemented with slight adjustments to the breath's volume in order to fine-tune the note. The dynamics and timbre of the notes produced by these two traditional techniques are different from the ones produced by open holes. They sound quieter and 'darker' as they lack upper harmonics but is precisely that what gives the *shakuhachi* its unique sonic character. Japanese instruments, much like *haiku* poems or *sumi-e* paintings, are able to produce the maximum effect with the minimum amount of material by carefully focusing on the limitations of the medium.

### 3.2 The instrument

The *shakuhachi* is a vertical end-blown bamboo flute. There is evidence that the Japanese *shakuhachi* has its roots in the Chinese bamboo flute *xiao* and was first imported to Japan with the *gagaku* ensemble by the eighth century.<sup>33</sup> The term *shakuhachi* means one *shaku* (Japanese foot) plus eight *sun* (1 *sun* = 1/10 *shaku*); that is, 1.8 *shaku* or approximately 54.5 cm. Although the 1.8 *shakuhachi* is the most common one (in the key of D), there are flutes in various sizes ranging from 1.3 to 2.8 *shaku* and in some extreme cases even larger than

---

<sup>33</sup> Simon, 'Western Extended Techniques in Traditional Japanese Wind Performance: Gagaku Kangen and Shakuhachi Honkyoku', p. 125-126.

that. Nevertheless, the word *shakuhachi* refers to any length of flute. The typical features of the modern-day instrument are: the use of the root end of the bamboo, five fingerholes (four on the front and one at the back), an outwardly cut mouthpiece, and a total of seven nodes on the bamboo.<sup>34</sup>

In the Edo period (1603-1868), the *shakuhachi* became associated with the *Rinzai* sect of *Zen* Buddhism as a religious implement (*hōki*) for wandering mendicant *komusō* monks. It was in this period that the classical *honkyoku* (original pieces) repertoire of the instrument was first collected and canonised, something that led to the establishment of the first playing school (*ryū*) of *shakuhachi*, *Kinko-ryū*. Through the years, additional schools were founded and similarly to every traditional art in Japan were regulated by the *iemoto* system. The *iemoto* is ‘the head of an institutionalised body, or guild, and s/he retains either the secret teaching, or, at least, is the proprietor of the accumulated artistic and aesthetic assets that belong to a group within any given art form’.<sup>35</sup> The *honkyoku* pieces gradually lost their position as the main repertoire as various schools secularised *shakuhachi* music by promoting new compositions and chamber music like *sankyoku* (pieces for *shakuhachi*, *koto*, and *shamisen*). Nevertheless, it is common for advanced students to study the *honkyoku* repertoire as a form of esoteric teaching after they have mastered the secular pieces.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Gunnar J. Linder, ‘Deconstructing Tradition in Japanese Music - A Study of Shakuhachi, Historical Authenticity and Transmission of Tradition’ (doctoral thesis, Department of Oriental Languages, Stockholm University, 2012) p. 83.

<sup>35</sup> Linder, ‘Deconstructing Tradition in Japanese Music’ p. 263.

<sup>36</sup> Linder, ‘Deconstructing Tradition in Japanese Music’ p. 273.

### 3.3 Traditional *shakuhachi* study and transmission of repertoire

The *shakuhachi* tradition is mainly an oral one. Despite the availability of published *honkyoku* scores nowadays, the transmission of the traditional repertoire is still mainly based on the one-to-one teacher-student relationship. During *shakuhachi* lessons, the teacher and student sit opposite each other and play in unison, with the student trying to imitate and match the teacher's playing and style. Once the piece is learned by ear, it is 'given' to the student meaning that s/he is now allowed to perform it and start working on it or 'polishing it off'.<sup>37</sup> When a piece is 'given' to the student that does not mean that the learning process is over; on the contrary, it is now the beginning of a long process of internalising the piece. At first, beginners imitate their teacher/school style with no or minimal deviation when performing a piece. As the student's skills develop and this internalisation process progresses, the performance itself begins to change. A master (*shihan*) and especially a grandmaster (*dai shihan*) is allowed to make subtle changes and sometimes even omit and/or add sections to a piece, in a way recreating the piece during each performance; an indication of 'owning' the piece.<sup>38</sup> This is apparent in how different the live or recorded performances of the same *honkyoku* piece by different masters can be. The *honkyoku* repertoire, although being a tradition dating hundreds of years back and regulated by stringent rules under the *iemoto* system, is not a fixed one. Quite the opposite, a *honkyoku* piece is considered an object always in progress,<sup>39</sup> faithful, to my mind, to the *wabi-sabi* aesthetic.

---

<sup>37</sup> Linder, 'Deconstructing Tradition in Japanese Music' p. 265.

<sup>38</sup> Simon, 'Western Extended Techniques in Traditional Japanese Wind Performance' p. 148.

When a student has learned the piece by ear, s/he is ‘given’ the piece in notated form by the teacher. *Shakuhachi* teachers use their own notation or the notation of the school to which they belong. The *shakuhachi* notation differs from the Western notation in many aspects. First and foremost, it is not a complete representation of the piece in the way a Western score is. Instead, it works primarily as a memory aid for the performer, being merely an extremely simplified depiction of the basic structure of the piece. The notation consists of syllabaries from one of the two syllabic/phonetic writing systems of the Japanese language *katakana*, and it can be described as a tablature-style fingering system.<sup>40</sup> *Shakuhachi* notation usually omits dynamics, ornamentation, timbral effects, rhythm, and sometimes even pitch. Some schools include basic rhythmic indications in their scores, something that is useful in ensemble pieces but in *honkyoku* repertoire, due to its free-rhythm nature, these indications end up being merely a guide.<sup>41</sup> Thus, as Riley Lee (a Western *dai shihan*) mentioned, *shakuhachi* notation is ‘neither prescriptive nor descriptive’.<sup>42</sup>

### 3.4 The *shakuhachi* as an embodiment of *wabi-sabi*

---

<sup>39</sup> Ingrid Fritsch, ‘A Comparison of Tozanryu and Kinkoryu Shakuhachi Arrangements for Sankyoku Gasso Made from Identical Originals.’ *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 15 (1983) 14-30, (p.17).

<sup>40</sup> Linder, ‘Deconstructing Tradition in Japanese Music’ p. 256.

<sup>41</sup> Simon, ‘Western Extended Techniques in Traditional Japanese Wind Performance’, p. 154.

<sup>42</sup> Riley K. Lee, ‘Yearning for the Bell: A Study of Transmission in the Shakuhachi Honkyoku Tradition’ (doctoral thesis, University of Sydney, 1992) p. 28.

My decision to introduce the *shakuhachi* into my sonic arsenal was not merely because I, as a composer, was attracted to its sound quality and sonic agility. Using the *shakuhachi* as a creative tool, helped me gain a more in-depth insight into the world of traditional Japanese aesthetics and the ways I could potentially incorporate them into my compositional process, for the instrument itself, as being discussed earlier, is a true embodiment of traditional Japanese aesthetics; especially that of *wabi-sabi*: the construction – a single piece of aged bamboo with five holes drilled to it – reflects the simple, austere beauty of the concept and being a very fragile instrument, extremely susceptible to environmental changes, the impermanence of it; the sound, being ‘breathy’, full of white noise and with a range characterised by unequal note quality, echoes the imperfection of all things; finally, the traditional repertoire, by continually evolving, is reminiscing of the fact that no work of art is ever truly finished.

### 3.5 Personal approach

Toru Takemitsu’s ‘November Steps’<sup>43</sup> for *shakuhachi*, *biwa*, and orchestra was my main inspiration in composing my first piece for *shakuhachi*. Although extremely eager to begin this new endeavour, at the beginning, I faced the difficulty perhaps every translator does when she attempts to translate a literary work from one language to another. More specifically, how is it possible to translate a (musical) idea from one culture to another? A problem that I had to solve before I could put the very first note on the manuscript paper; a

---

<sup>43</sup> Tōru Takemitsu, *November Steps*, (New York, C.F. Peters Corporation, Edition Peters 66299, 1967)

problem with two parts: aesthetical and notational issues. Soon I came to realise the limitations of my musical language. My intention was neither to write a traditional *shakuhachi* piece, nor a contemporary Western art music piece infused with Japanese elements. To blend these two completely different sonic and cultural worlds was still an impossibility for me. At this point, I decided to look closer into the work that inspired me to write for *shakuhachi* in the first place, ‘November Steps’.

When Takemitsu was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic to compose this particular piece, he had the aesthetic desire to create a piece that would be like ‘swimming in an ocean that has no East or West’<sup>44</sup> and spent months trying to envision a way of blending the two sound worlds: Japanese traditional instruments (*shakuhachi-biwa*) and the Western orchestra. According to him: ‘Sound in Western music progresses horizontally. But the sound of the *shakuhachi* rises vertically, like a tree’.<sup>45</sup> At the end, the solution like a *satori* came to him: he should not be occupied with such things as how to merge the two worlds; their differences should be emphasised and juxtaposition in all possible levels is the way to achieve that: the spatial separation of the orchestra in three sections, (left, right, and back) placing the two Japanese instruments in the middle; the free rhythm notation of *biwa* and *shakuhachi* in contrast to the standard notation of the orchestra; and finally, imaginative orchestration that allows the sound of the two Japanese instruments to be heard clearly at any given time no matter how ‘big’ the sound of the orchestra can get.

---

<sup>44</sup> Peter Burt, ‘The Music of Tōru Takemitsu: Influences, Confluences, and Status’ (doctoral thesis, Durham University, 1998) p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selective Readings*. p. 87.



That made clear to me that striving to merge the two worlds into one was a futile attempt. I should cultivate within me those two traditions and confront their contradictions by emphasising them just like Takemitsu did and try not to force ‘Japanese sounds into Western musical structures’.<sup>46</sup> My intention is definitely not to be disrespectful to the *shakuhachi* tradition that dates hundreds of years back, but to make a fetish out of an instrument is contributing to my mind absolutely nothing to music; traditional music has an incredible power and beauty indeed, but my intention is to create something with a strong relationship/connection to the present. My engagement with the *shakuhachi* offered me new compositional material and made my sound world not only wider but also deeper; it made me realise the limitations of my music language as a Western classical trained musician and began to pose profound questions to me. But perhaps this gap between the two music languages, this untranslated landscape is the path I wish to walk. This empty space, as an excellent example of *ma*, could work as a bridge between worlds and be the solution to both my aesthetic and notational problems in my attempt of composing my first works for *shakuhachi*. From this emptiness, sounds in their ultimate expressiveness should be born and finally return to it.

### 3.6 Notational issues

As has been discussed above, notation in *honkyoku* repertoire works merely as a memory aid; a rough sketch meant to be completed by the performer. Being mainly an oral tradition, the

---

<sup>46</sup> Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selective Readings*. p. 56.

things that are being ‘asked’ of the performer on paper can only be understood by listening and not by mere visual representation. During performance, theoretical thinking ceases to exist and the sound, resonating through the performer, transcends the realm of personal. It was of great importance to me to ‘transfer’ this element to my performance and writing; I had to find a way to recreate that effect without the use of a traditional *shakuhachi* score. In order to achieve that, I had to step outside the typical Western system of notation, where a piece is fixed on paper. My intention was not to create an improvisational piece either, where perhaps something like a graphic score would suffice. Like *honkyoku* pieces, I wanted my score to be a sketch of a very specific idea; an idea that ideally could be interpreted by each performer in a slightly different way. Once again, I had to explore the empty space between two worlds.

Through the years, many composers have attempted to notate new music for *shakuhachi* using Western notation. While studying different scores in order to find a starting point for my own notational needs, I realised that despite their differences, the majority of notational attempts seem to fall into two major categories. The first, influenced greatly by standard Western music notation, is trying to be as specific as possible regarding notational aspects like pitch, duration, rhythm, etc. That creates music that can be carried out by a large number of performers with little or no deviation from the composer’s original idea. The second one, closer to the spirit of traditional *shakuhachi* notation, is not that much concerned with absolute precision, and allows a certain degree of freedom during performance, although within certain well-defined limits. It was clear to me that the second group would work as my starting point. I was in need of a notational system that covers the majority of traditional playing techniques as well as a number of recent innovations and solves the problem of note duration.

Traditional *shakuhachi* notation specifies only two vague note durations: long and short. The exact interpretation of that is up to the performer who frequently provides many variations in length for each long or short note; this lends the music a beautiful fluidity that has breathing as the main focal point.<sup>47</sup> But how can this fluidity be notated with Western notation? Using standard note durations for my *shakuhachi* works would result in a very ‘rigid’ score that would not be able to express the sound I had in mind. My first thought was to use proportional notation as Takemitsu did in ‘November Steps’, although my main concern was that the performer would possibly be too focused on interpreting the precise note lengths while playing. That, to my mind, would lead to another type of rigidity, not sonic (most probably), but mental. But how does, the *shakuhachi* part in ‘November Steps’ have such a natural flow despite the fact that the performer follows a very precise and detailed proportional score? Listening to various recordings of ‘November Steps’ while following the score, I came to realise that the *shakuhachi* performers do not follow the written note lengths with absolute precision. Like in *honkyoku* scores, the note lengths are for them merely a guide. Moreover, what caught my attention was a little comment in Takemitsu’s score regarding note duration: ‘It has to be grasped interiorly’.<sup>48</sup> Of course, that does not mean that a *shakuhachi* note length cannot be measured accurately. What I believe Takemitsu suggests, is that he is not interested in the precise length; like in *honkyoku*, his score is just a sketch to

---

<sup>47</sup> Tania Cronin, ‘On Writing for the Shakuhachi: A Western Perspective’, *Contemporary Music Review*, 8:2, (1993) 77-81, (p.80).

<sup>48</sup> Tōru Takemitsu, *November Steps*, (New York, C.F. Peters Corporation, Edition Peters 66299, 1967)

be completed by the performer in a natural, intuitive way, for music always comes from within and not just from what is written on a piece of paper.

Eventually, I decided to follow the same path: I used mainly proportional notation for my *shakuhachi* scores with a reminder to the performers that the indicated note lengths work mainly as a guide and they should interpret them as they see fit and natural to the performance of each phrase. Regarding the notation of performing techniques, I primarily used Jeffrey Lependorf's notation system as it is presented in his article 'Contemporary Notation for the Shakuhachi: A Primer for Composers'.<sup>49</sup> Although a relatively old article, it covers in a very comprehensive way the majority of traditional performing techniques of the *shakuhachi* as well as a couple of recent innovations. In addition to that, I borrowed a number of notation techniques from the score of 'November Steps' and also created some of my own when I could not find something relevant or when I thought a particular technique could be notated in a better way.

### 3.7 Compositional planning

After clarifying aesthetic and notational issues, it was time for me to start putting the initial sketches for my first *shakuhachi* piece on paper. At first, my intention was to create a piece for *shakuhachi* and electronics for my PhD portfolio. Instead, I decided to start with a solo *shakuhachi* piece before attempting to compose an electroacoustic work. The reason for that

---

<sup>49</sup> Jeffrey Lependorf, 'Contemporary Notation for the Shakuhachi: A Primer for Composers', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vo; 27. No. 2 (1989) 232-251.

was that I wanted to focus on the instrument itself before endeavouring to combine it with electronics. A solo piece would allow me to investigate whether my aesthetic and notational ideas are actually applicable and fine-tune my technique before I proceeded to an electroacoustic piece. Moreover, a solo piece could serve another purpose: Although I wanted my *shakuhachi* works to be composed in an as intuitive way as possible, I had to decide what kind of structure and form my work would have. I was quite reluctant to utilise any of the usual Western classical music forms; using something so standardised felt out of context with the sound I had in mind. Once again, I turned to the score of ‘November Steps’ for inspiration.

‘November Steps’ is a beautiful and mysterious score. It doesn’t seem to have a clear climax, and although one can find apparent structural elements on the macro and micro levels of the score, a typical overall organisational structure does not seem to be the case in this work. Takemitsu, by emphasising the contradiction between the Japanese instruments and the Western orchestra, managed to create a score that is neither occidental nor oriental; ‘an ocean that has no East or West’ indeed.<sup>50</sup> According to the composer, the large-scale structure of the work was inspired by the *danmono*, which is a traditional style of instrumental music for *koto*.<sup>51</sup> A *danmono* piece consists of a number of movements or *dan* (step in Japanese); it starts slowly, it gradually increases in speed and towards the end returns to the original tempo.<sup>52</sup> One could say that the *danmono* is similar to the Western Theme and Variations

---

<sup>50</sup> Burt, ‘The Music of Tōru Takemitsu: Influences, Confluences, and Status’ p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selective Readings*. p. 63.

<sup>52</sup> Adriaansz, Willem, ‘A Japanese Procrustean Bed: A Study of the Development of Danmono’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 23 (1970) 26-60 (p.27).

form, but that is not exactly the case in ‘November Steps’ since there is not a distinct melodic motive that could work as the main theme. Instead, the ‘theme’ and its variations, I believe, is the actual juxtaposition between the Japanese instruments and the Western orchestra. Inspired by that, I tried to implement for my solo *shakuhachi* piece ‘Triptych’ a form based on steps as well, although my intention was not to create a Theme and Variations type of score.

The picture that I had in mind for that piece was a sea of silence where each step resembles a wave that is born, rises, and finally returns to it. What I found really challenging while working with that type of form is that although it was absolutely necessary for me to create a type of cohesion within the score – in order for the end result not to sound like various random bits of music were brought together – I primarily wished to create a piece that like ‘November Steps’ does not move towards a climax; a piece that neglects the usual developmental stages found in a typical composition and its conclusion does not feel like an ending but something that could possibly continue forever; a work that is focused on the present moment and each step is not the consequence or continuation of the previous one or a prelude to the next one, but something individual and independent. Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928-2007), in his electronic composition ‘Kontakte’ (1960) and later in his instrumental works ‘Carre’ (1960) and ‘Momente’ (1965), was probably the first to introduced a very similar type of form called *moment form*, where ‘a piece unfolds as a succession of unrelated episodes or moments’.<sup>53</sup> According to Stockhausen, the greatest difficulty and challenge of the *moment form* is the creation of unity and what creates that unity is each episode’s degree of presence or immediacy. Everything must have the same degree of presence, for if certain

---

<sup>53</sup> Curtis Roads, *Composing Electronic Music: A New Aesthetic*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 314.

events have more presence than others hierarchy is born and at that point, *moment form* ceases to exist and transforms to a sequential and/or developmental one.<sup>54</sup>

### 3.8 Triptych

For solo *shakuhachi*

Performed by the composer

Duration: 11:40

‘Triptych’ is a solo piece for *shakuhachi* consisting of three movements. Each movement is inspired by one of the three Imperial Regalia of Japan that are presented to the emperor by *Shintō* priests during his enthronement ceremony, confirming his divinity and legitimacy as the supreme ruler of Japan. The ceremony is not open to the public, and the exact locations where each one of the objects are kept are not confirmed, hence their legendary status of these objects. The three Imperial Regalia of Japan consist of the sword *Kusanagi*, the mirror *Yata no Kagami*, and the jewel *Yasakani no Magatama* and they represent the three main virtues: valour, wisdom, and benevolence respectively.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Four Criteria of Electronic Music with Examples from Kontakte*, (Film of lecture at Oxford University: Kürten, DE Stockhausen Verlag, 1972).

<sup>55</sup> George Sansom, *A History of Japan 1334–1615*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961) p. 9.

As discussed earlier, I made the decision to use mainly proportional notation for the score although passages notated with normal note values do occur when the need arose for a phrase or part of it to be more precisely notated. In order to suggest a tempo for the piece I used a 'Meditative' tempo mark where the duration of a quarter note and also one centimetre on the manuscript paper (when proportional notation is used) equals approximately one second, reminding the performer though that note and silent part lengths, like in traditional *shakuhachi* notation, are merely a guide. I invite the performer not to be attached to the precise lengths but to make adjustments as s/he sees fit and natural to the performance of each phrase based on her/his breathing patterns and through rehearsing eventually to reach the point, much like a *honkyoku* player, of 'owning' the piece. At the beginning of the score, there is a comprehensive list of all the performing techniques used, the symbols that represent them in the score, and a short description for each one of them.

I decided to submit a handwritten score for two reasons: Although I am quite competent producing contemporary scores in Finale or Sibelius, due to the abundance of custom notation in my piece, I found the whole process of crafting the score digitally a very time consuming one. It was necessary to use a graphic design software in order to import to the Sibelius score custom symbols and lines and on that area, my skills are quite limited. Aside from practical/technical reasons, I believe that a handwritten score is more suitable for the piece in discussion; it provides an intimacy to the music that a digital score would not be able to do and feels closer to the traditional handwritten *shakuhachi* scores from an aesthetic point of view.



‘Triptych’ is a loosely programmatic work and it was intuitively composed. Each movement started as an improvisation inspired by the many tales and myths surrounding the three artefacts, which was subsequently refined on paper. The material of the composition was not prepared in advance, and although certain gestures and pitch formations do recur, that was not pre-designed. The approach mentioned above was very much influenced by Giacinto Scelsi’s (1905-1988) way of working. The Italian composer, who had studied and was influenced by Eastern religions and philosophy, used to develop his pieces through improvisations whose recordings he used in order to make the final transcription of a work. As it was mentioned before, the traditional method of playing chromatically on the *shakuhachi* is to bend upwards or downwards the notes produced by the open holes of the instrument using the *meri-kari* techniques. These chromatic notes, due to the lack of upper harmonics, sound darker and have weaker dynamics compared to the open hole notes (D-F-G-A-C on the 1.8 shaku instrument that was used for the performance of the piece). Although the three movements do not have a clear tonic centre and are not composed on a specific scale, I discovered that they tend to gravitate towards certain open hole notes; more specifically towards D, G, and A of the *otsu* (lower octave of the instrument), something that possibly works as a unifying force between the different phrases/steps of each movement as well as the three movements themselves.

During my attempt at bridging the worlds of traditional *shakuhachi* music and contemporary Western art music by emphasising their differences, I strived to distance myself from the analogies/convergences between the *shakuhachi* and the Western concert flute. The *shakuhachi* undoubtedly belongs to the wide flute family and indeed some of its techniques can be performed on the concert flute. Likewise, various extended techniques of the flute

have been used by composers (including myself) whilst writing new music for *shakuhachi*. Despite their similarities, I tried to focus on a handful of fundamental differences between the two instruments in order to achieve a more idiomatic writing. Some of these differences are quite apparent, like the numerous techniques and sounds not possible to be produced by the concert flute. Others are subtler like the fact that *shakuhachi* players do not use diaphragmatic vibrato but instead by shaking their head from side to side, up and down, or in combinations of the previous two, are able to create a large variety of vibrato and pitch inflection effects. Additionally, the absence of a mechanical key system in combination with the *meri/kari* techniques, the large fingerholes, and the wide mouthpiece, makes microtonal inflection and glissandi on the *shakuhachi* a simple task and creates the impression that various techniques of the instrument are closer to string than to wind instruments techniques.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Lependorf, 'Contemporary Notation for the Shakuhachi: A Primer for Composers' p. 233.

### 3.9 *Yomi*

For *shakuhachi* and electronics

Performed by the composer

Duration: 7:15

*Yomi* is a work for *shakuhachi* and electronics. *Yomi* or *Yomi-no-kumi* is the Japanese word for the land of the dead as depicted in the *Shintō* religion and according to the legend it has geographical continuity with the world of the living with its entrance lying in the *Izumo* province.<sup>57</sup> *Yomi*'s fundamental difference from what is described as the underworld in other religions (like the Christian Hell, Buddhist *Naraka*, Chinese *Diyu*, etc.) is the fact that it is not a place where the deceased suffer as a retribution for their actions or sins in life. *Shintō* is a religion that focuses on life and the present, associating death with impurity and pollution; therefore, there are no funeral rituals in *Shintō* (its followers use Buddhist funeral rituals instead).<sup>58</sup> That possibly explains why *Yomi* is described as a dark place where the dead continue their shadowy existence regardless of their behaviour before death; like in the realm of *Hades* (the underworld of ancient Greece), the deceased walk the land of the dead without purpose for all eternity.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Sokyo Ono, William Woodard, *Shinto: The Kami Way* (North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing Company, 1962), p. 106.

<sup>58</sup> Ono, Woodard, *Shinto: The Kami Way*, p. 109.

<sup>59</sup> Naofusa Hirai, 'Shintō', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (1999),  
<<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shinto#ref8482>> [accessed 5 June 2018]

The work was inspired by Izanagi's journey to the underworld and his attempt to reunite with his deceased sister Izanami. The siblings Izanagi no Mikoto and Izanami no Mikoto are central deities in the Japanese creation myth and pantheon who through their union produced numerous other deities as well as the islands of Japan. While giving birth to the fire god Kagutsuchi, Izanami suffered fatal burns and went to *Yomi* with Izanagi following her to the land of darkness in an attempt to bring her back. Unfortunately, she had already consumed food in the underworld and according to the legend, once one has eaten in *Yomi* it is impossible to return to the land of the living. Once Izanagi saw the rotting body of his sister covered in maggots, he fled horrified and sealed the entrance of *Yomi* with a big rock. After the incident, Izanagi bathed in the sea to purify himself from the contact with the dead and his bath is regarded to be the founding of *Shintō*'s ritual purification practices called *Harai*.<sup>60</sup>

In this work, the *shakuhachi* part represents Izanagi and his journey, while the electronics the echoes of the underworld as the spirits of the dead and the place itself react to the presence of the deity. Therefore, the *shakuhachi* part is used as the sonic material for the creation of the electronics part in order to emphasise/justify this connection. The structure of the *shakuhachi* part is similar to the one I used for the work 'Triptych' as described earlier: it is intuitively composed and it makes use of a form based on steps. This time though, each step is longer, with the whole work consisting of seven steps, each one representing a different part of Izanagi's journey to the underworld. The same 'Meditative' tempo mark as in 'Triptych' is used here again, where the duration of a quarter note and also one centimetre on the

---

<sup>60</sup> Justin Bachelor, 'Izanagi and Izanami', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (2015), <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Izanagi>> [accessed 5 June 2018]

manuscript paper (when proportional notation is used) equals approximately to one second, bearing in mind once again that note and silent parts lengths are purely a guide.

Due to the free-rhythm nature of the piece and also my encouragement towards the performer to interpret relatively freely note lengths and silent parts, I faced the problem of finding a way to perform the piece live. Having the *shakuhachi* player performing on top of a fixed electronics backing track was out of the question. Demanding strict synchronisation between the electronics and the *shakuhachi* parts (using a timer or a metronome for example) would be extremely restrictive to the interpretative skills of the performer. Instead, I was in need of a performing method that could adapt as much as possible to each *shakuhachi* player's individual timing. The simplest and at the same time most effective way to accomplish that was to split the electronics track into consecutive sections and load them in sequence into a software sampler. The performer can then trigger them with the help of a midi foot-controller or foot-switch. The starting point of each section is notated on the score using boxed numbers in ascending order.

## Chapter 4: Works for ensemble

### 4.1 Introduction

While composing and performing electronic works, I investigated expressions of *ma* that have to do with the inspiration that led to the creation of a piece, the construction of the sounds themselves, their interaction and distribution in space, and the confrontation and balancing between sound and silence that is expressed as a relationship that is difficult to define technically. This silence does not only give birth to sound but also deprives it of its position of dominance and demands from the listener contemplation and action as well. All the above manifestations of *ma* can be found during the creation of acoustic works as well. What made the inclusion of ensemble works in my portfolio necessary was an expression of *ma* absent in electronic works: that found in human interaction during performance. The scores of the ensemble works described below explore the different ways the performers experience time (through the free time format used) and space (due to the fact that all performers read from the main score), and how each musician tries to bridge the gap between themselves and the rest of the group in order for this collaborative situation to be successful.

‘*Daitoku – ji*’s Tea Room’ and ‘*Yūgen*’ were performed by Ensemble Variances<sup>61</sup> and they were recorded live during two composition workshops that took place at the music department of the University of Bristol in 2016 and 2017 respectively. ‘Open Fields’ is the

---

<sup>61</sup> <<http://www.ensemblevariances.com>>

last work I composed for my PhD portfolio; combining *shakuhachi*, an ensemble of Western orchestral instruments, and electronics, it brings together all my compositional ideas and techniques applied so far and works as a summative work for my portfolio.

#### 4.2 *Daitoku – ji's Tea Room*

For flute, clarinet, piano, cello, and double bass

Performed by Ensemble Variances

Duration: 7:40

*Daitoku-ji* (temple of Great Virtue) is a Buddhist temple, one of fourteen autonomous branches of the *Rinzai* school of Japanese *Zen* and it is located in Kyoto, Japan. *Daitoku-ji* became closely linked to the master of the Japanese tea ceremony Sen no Rikyū, who underwent his *Zen* training there, and consequently to the realm of the Japanese tea cult; particularly the tradition of *wabi-cha*.

'*Daitoku-ji's* Tea Room' is a sonic walk through the gardens of the temple and it consists of three sections: 'walking in the garden', 'the pond', and 'entering the tea room'. I have not visited the temple myself. My impression of the place is based solely on photographs and writings; thus, the music could be characterised as loosely programmatic and it is intuitively composed. Certain gestures and pitch formations do recur, although not pre-designed. The score is in free time format with each system lasting approximately seventeen seconds. Due to the very nature of the score, there are no individual parts provided for each instrument.

Instead, the performers read from the main score. The reason for that is that the relationships between each instrument like the onset of each phrase, the silent parts, etc., should be interpreted graphically according to the score. The only exception to that are events connected with a vertical dashed line which indicates synchronisation.

In 1980 Toru Takemitsu wrote that ‘thinking of musical form I think of liquid form. I wish for musical changes to be as gradual as the tides’.<sup>62</sup> These words and particularly his work ‘Rain Spell’ (1982) for flute, clarinet, harp, piano, and vibraphone inspired me to use free time format for my piece. The free time format of the score lends the music a fluidity, so important for this work that, to my mind, could not be achieved using a traditional time format. Indeed, the particular choice proved to be very effective in performance during the workshop and produced the effect that I had in mind while composing the piece. I am very grateful to the members of the Ensemble Variances for their tremendously useful and insightful comments that helped me not only to refine certain notational issues but also to be better prepared for future performances of the piece.

### 4.3 *Yūgen*

For flute, clarinet, piano, and cello

Performed by Ensemble Variances

---

<sup>62</sup> Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selective Readings*. p. 132.



Duration: 7:14

*Yūgen* may be the most indefinable among the traditional Japanese aesthetic notions. It describes the subtle profundity of things, suggests that which is beyond what can be expressed with words, and carries the connotation of half-revealed or suggested beauty. However, *yūgen* is not an allusion to another world; it is about this world, our current experience.<sup>63</sup> Favouring allusiveness over explicitness is a major feature of traditional Japanese culture<sup>64</sup> and the following characterisation of *yūgen* is a fine example of that: ‘When looking at autumn mountains through mist, the view may be indistinct yet have great depth. Although few autumn leaves may be visible through the mist, the view is alluring. The limitless vista created in imagination far surpasses anything one can see more clearly’.<sup>65</sup>

While *wabi* is mainly associated with the tea ceremony and *sabi* is evoked in the haiku of the great Japanese poets, the notion of *yūgen* has played the most crucial role in the art of the *Nō* drama<sup>66</sup>, one of the most significant cultural achievements of Japan in the middle ages. Its founder was Kannami Kiyotsugu (1333-1384), but the most important figure in the development of the *Nō* drama was his son Zeami Motokiyo (1364-1444), who in an effort to

---

<sup>63</sup> Andrew A. Tsubaki, ‘Zeami and the Transition of the Concept of Yūgen: A Note on Japanese Aesthetics’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. Vol. XXX/1, (Fall 1971) 55-67, (p. 55).

<sup>64</sup> Graham Parkes, ‘Japanese Aesthetics’, *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/japanese-aesthetics/>> [accessed 4 November 2017]

<sup>65</sup> Haga Kōshirō, ‘The Wabi Aesthetic through the Ages’, in *Japanese Aesthetics and Culture: A Reader*, ed. by Nancy G. Hume (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 245-278 (p. 254).

<sup>66</sup> Parkes, ‘Japanese Aesthetics’.

establish aesthetic principles for his art adopted the concept of *yūgen* as the highest aesthetic ideal of *Nō*. Although ‘to be *yūgen*’ was the ultimate stage of attainment in all arts, the concept kept evolving constantly through the ages. Especially through its merging with the concept of *sabi*, we witness a transition of the concept from the mythical to the mundane, and at this last stage it comes to mean simply ‘the beauty of gentle gracefulness’.<sup>67</sup> *Sabi* implies the harmony created through the bridging of two highly contrasting elements, a contrast that empowers both and produces a unified beauty. Influenced by that, in Zeami’s *yūgen*, the conflicting factors of abundance (*yū*) and nothingness (*mu*) are employed as a means of highlighting the artistic effect in *Nō* theatre. A striking example of that is the *Nō* actor himself where the elegance and magnificence (*yū*) of his costume is completed by the directness and frugality (*mu*) – although extremely expressive – of his stage movement.

‘*Yūgen*’ as a piece shares the same free time format as its predecessor ‘*Daitoku – ji*’s Tea Room’. Although inspired by the homonym concept, the idea behind the piece is that of a sonic representation of an imaginary *Nō* play. As in the case of ‘*Daitoku – ji*’s Tea Room’, the music is intuitively composed and the performers read from the main score instead of individual parts for the same reasons explained before. The only difference is that in ‘*Yūgen*’ each system lasts approximately twenty seconds instead of seventeen.

Ensemble performance in traditional Japanese music is very different from the one in Western classical music. A principal melody works as the core and every instrument seems to branch off from that, reflecting its own distinct sonic character. The final beat of each phrase

---

<sup>67</sup> Tsubaki, *Zeami and the Transition of the Concept of Yūgen: A Note on Japanese Aesthetics*. p. 61.

is usually stretched and there is always a certain degree of flexibility in the entrance of each musician in the succeeding phrase.<sup>68</sup> This elasticity creates a beautiful fluidity in the music that I strived to recreate in both works. That effect, being entirely intuitive produced, is something that I doubt can be notated. Hence, I decided to discuss the concept with the performers during the rehearsals instead. Moreover, the empty space (*ma*) between the phrases and the fact that every musician reads from the main score seems to work in favour of that effect.

#### 4.4 Open Fields

For *shakuhachi*, oboe, bass clarinet, piano, cello, and electronics

Duration: app. 13:00

In the Spring of 2018, I visited the former Nazi concentration and extermination camp of Auschwitz in Poland. The Auschwitz complex consisted of more than forty camps and subcamps with Auschwitz II-Birkenau being the largest and it was there where the majority of the victims of Auschwitz died. In the summer of 1944 with the Red Army approaching, the German leadership began the evacuation and liquidation of the camp (In mid-January 1945, shortly after the launch of the Red Army's Vistula-Oder offensive, the Germans commenced the final evacuation and liquidation phase of the camp) as an effort to destroy

---

<sup>68</sup> Tania Cronin, 'On Writing for the Shakuhachi: A Western Perspective', *Contemporary Music Review*, 8:2, (1993) 77-81, (p. 80).

any evidence of the crimes committed in Auschwitz.<sup>69</sup> The majority of the barracks in Birkenau camp were burned down, with its crematorium and gas chambers being blown up. Nowadays, apart from the main gate, the monument to the victims, and a handful of barracks, Birkenau is an immense green field surrounded by dense forest. The only thing that disrupts this openness are the poles that used to hold the electric fences, and the chimneys, part of the heating system of the burned down barracks. I found myself mesmerised by this view and especially by the power of the negative space between those chimneys; something so empty and in a way beautiful used to enclose so much horror and despair. The way these empty spaces convey the negative beauty of disaster was the idea behind the piece ‘Open Fields’.

‘Open Fields’ shares the same free time format with ‘*Daitoku – ji*’s Tea Room’ and ‘*Yūgen*’ with each system lasting approximately twenty seconds. Additionally, similar to ‘*Yomi*’ I split the electronics track into consecutive sections with the starting point of each section being notated on the score using boxed numbers in ascending order. During the performance of the work, a performer can trigger them using a software sampler. Contrary to ‘*Daitoku – ji*’s Tea Room’ and ‘*Yūgen*’ that were intuitively composed, ‘Open Fields’ is built around a specific three-note motif: an ascending minor second followed by a descending major third, along with the inversion, retrograde, and retrograde inversion of it. The numerous iterations of this motif throughout the score develop only slightly or most of the time not at all. This almost static quality of the motif represents the invariable daily routine of the prisoners at the camp.

---

<sup>69</sup> <http://auschwitz.org>

When it comes to the *shakuhachi* part, I strived to integrate its sound as much as possible within the sound of the rest of the ensemble. I sought to create a piece for ensemble and electronics and not a ‘*shakuhachi*, ensemble, and electronics’ one. The *shakuhachi* is a traditionally non-equal-tempered instrument hence tuning challenges may occur when it is combined with Western fixed equal-tempered instruments (string instruments, trombone, and unpitched percussion can always be a ‘safer’ choice). An advanced *shakuhachi* player can obviously tune her instrument to equal temperament during performance but that would result in a non-idiomatic writing for the instrument and that was simply not a choice for this work. Aside from tuning issues, the *shakuhachi*, as a bamboo instrument, can be very easily overpowered by other instruments, so dynamic balance should also be taken very carefully under consideration. The way to overcome these challenges and avoid a mismatch of timbral aesthetics was to use as careful an orchestration as possible while maintaining an idiomatic writing for the *shakuhachi* part. The electronic part, aside from having its own narrative, also works as a kind of timbral mediation, bridging the two sonic worlds.

The ideal performance setting for ‘Open Fields’ as well as for ‘*Daitoku – ji*’s Tea Room’ and ‘*Yūgen*’ would be the following: The performers are placed in various spots on stage (a relatively large stage would be ideal), as far as possible from each other, and not in a typical formation. In the case of ‘Open Fields’, for the playback of the electronics track, a stereo set of speakers should be placed at the back of the stage facing the audience.

#### 4.5 Summary

‘*Daitoku – ji*’s Tea Room’, ‘*Yūgen*’, and ‘Open Fields’ address all three definitions of *ma* related to compositional practice as discussed in previous chapter. To begin with, all three of them act as bridges between worlds. They carry to the listener images of a faraway place so different from the concert setting he is in; images that the listener can interpret/recreate in his mind according to his imagination and/or experience. Additionally, the presentation of a setting associated with the tea ceremony (‘*Daitoku – ji*’s Tea Room’) and *Nō* theatre performance (‘*Yūgen*’) – two practices deeply rooted in Japanese culture – by an ensemble of Western instruments acts as a bridge between different cultures as well. Likewise, in ‘Open Fields’ the *shakuhachi* joins an ensemble of Western orchestral instruments and electronics in an attempt to tell a story inspired by a place that played a significant part in a major event of modern Western history. All three works make heavy use of silence as a structural element and being proportional scores intended to be performed quite freely, they allow significant expressive freedom to the performers. As a result, these works are slightly different every time they are performed. The silent parts, in combination with the mainly quiet character of the pieces, bring in the foreground all the non-musical sounds associated with the performance of an acoustic instrument such as mechanical noises, the creaks of the piano stool, etc. – sounds that are usually classified as unwanted or imperfections in a commercial recording – and render them an essential part of the sonic world of the piece, equally important to the music parts. Finally, the sparse sonic world of these works puts emphasis on the spatial separation of the instruments (‘*Daitoku – ji*’s Tea Room’ and ‘*Yūgen*’ were performed in a workshop setting, thus I was limited as to how I could place the performers on stage during the recording of them) and invites the listener to actively participate in the space created by them in order to fill it with meaning.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### 5.1 Introduction

It has been said that John Cage was the one that ‘gave composers “permission” to pursue their ideas without fear of ideology’, enabling various technical and stylistic possibilities.<sup>70</sup> His ideas, along with the influence of postmodernism during the second half of the twentieth century released many composers from the aesthetic limitations of the academic modernism of the 50’s and 60’s. By blurring the boundaries between sonorities/procedures of the past and the present and sometimes by including references to other traditions and cultures,<sup>71</sup> every material became equally available to the composer; triadic harmony can be as radical as noise and non-musical sounds. Perhaps we are reaching an era where the ‘radical’ and the ‘conservative’ could be in a way bridged, as the leading ethic for several composers nowadays is choice rather than the pursuit for innovation.<sup>72</sup> Embracing this ethic, I felt myself free to choose what best facilitates the expression of my compositional ideas without fear of reproach: more specifically, the traditional Japanese aesthetic notions of *wabi* and *sabi*

---

<sup>70</sup> Tim Rutherford-Johnson, *Music After the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture Since 1989* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), p. 53.

<sup>71</sup> Jonathan D. Kramer, ‘The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism’ in *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*, ed. by Judy Lochhead & Joseph Auner (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 13-26 (p.16).

<sup>72</sup> Rutherford-Johnson, *Music After the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture Since 1989*. p. 55.

and the fusion of spatial and temporal experiences that forms the core of the concept of *ma*; a concept very difficult not only to define but also to treat in an analytical or theoretical manner. Therefore, I decided to have a practice-led approach in my endeavour to better understand the concept of *ma*, filtered through three expressions of it that I believe have some relevance to the compositional and performance process: empty intervals defined by objects in space, bridges between musical and cultural worlds, and pauses between consecutive sonic events.

## 5.2 Further expressions of *Ma*

The compositional process was not the only occasion where I could explore expressions of *ma* in my creative practice. The gap between the private world of my studio and the public environment of the performance space can be experienced as a *ma*-rich space that bridges the creative practice of the composer with the creativity of the listeners as they form interpretations of meaning through the listening experience. Outside my studio, it was extremely educating for me to see how I experience *ma* in a performance setting, i.e. how I comprehend the *ma* created by the empty spaces between the speakers as well as the one formed by pauses in the music during the live spatialisation of my electronic works in order to translate it into spatial movement. On the other hand, it was very interesting to witness the different ways performers understand and realise the silent parts of the score and how they interact with each other during the performance of my works. Last but not least, at the workshops for the pieces ‘*Daitoku – ji*’s Tea Room’ and ‘*Yūgen*’ I witnessed another manifestation of *ma* that occurs during ensemble performance; one that was described by the



Japanese artist Sachio Goda: during the performance of an ensemble work, in order for this collaborative situation to be successful, each musician has to adapt their individuality to each other. Goda suggests that there is a point when every performer realises that part of herself cannot adapt any further. It is in that exact moment that *ma* appears as each musician tries to bridge the gap between themselves and the others in an attempt to create an aesthetic balance and avoid destructive confrontation within the group.<sup>73</sup> That remark made me realise that it is the contrast between hiatus and flow, and most importantly their abrupt antagonism during a performance that makes these two pieces (and hopefully ‘Open Fields’ as well) ‘work’ and not an organic relation between the performers. That is perhaps what Goda means when she states that ‘the poetry of *ma* always involves a measure of discomfort within the habits of expectation’.<sup>74</sup>

### 5.3 Acoustic and cultural ‘masking’

In my compositional practice, I am addressing many aspects of non-Western culture; I am trying to approach, understand, and make use of an aesthetic and knowledge system that interests me but of which I am not a part. Allowing my compositional practice to be influenced by traditional Japanese aesthetics does not mean that I wish my music to sound Japanese or to create some sort of pastiche. My aspiration is to approach and understand these concepts as much as possible and subsequently give them new expression within the

---

<sup>73</sup> Sachiyo Goda, ‘An Investigation into the Japanese Notion of “Ma”’: Practising Sculpture within Space-Time Dialogues’, (doctoral thesis, Northumbria University, 2011) p. 60.

<sup>74</sup> Goda, ‘An Investigation into the Japanese Notion of Ma’, p. 154.

vocabulary of Western art music. There are various approaches and means of exchange when someone attempts to bring two (musical) traditions together, and I am fully aware that during every cultural exchange there will be incompatibilities and that, most probably, will involve some loss; i.e. aspects of the one may ‘mask’<sup>75</sup> aspects of the other.<sup>76</sup> An example of that in my composition practice would be the issue of notation and dynamic balance when it comes to the *shakuhachi* part of some of my works. Western music notation usually imposes a kind of ‘quantisation’ (composer Trevor Wishart calls that ‘lattices’)<sup>77</sup> to various musical parameters such as pitch, time, dynamics, etc., and that can result in the loss of certain performing nuances of non-Western instruments. Additionally, being a bamboo instrument, the *shakuhachi* can get very easily overpowered by an ‘aggressive’ electronic part or even by comparable Western instruments like the concert flute. It is imperative for the composer to realise that this ‘masking’ could affect not only acoustic but also aesthetic aspects, should she fail to recognise or appreciate what is of importance to another culture.<sup>78</sup> It is therefore essential to find ways of avoiding an ‘appropriation without understanding’ approach when we bring two (musical) traditions together; only then will what is gained be more important than what is lost.

---

<sup>75</sup> ‘Masking’ is a term derived from acoustics. When two sounds are played together, we say that one masks the other when the latter can no longer be perceived.

<sup>76</sup> Simon Emmerson, ‘Appropriation, Exchange, Understanding’, in EMS: Electroacoustic Music Studies Network, Beijing 2006, (p.2) <<http://www.ems-network.org/spip.php?article292>> [accessed 19 January 2019]

<sup>77</sup> Trevor Wishart, *On Sonic Art*, (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996), p. 23.

<sup>78</sup> Emmerson, ‘Appropriation, Exchange, Understanding’, p. 8.

## 5.4 Conclusion and future research

Conceptualising *ma* and *wabi-sabi* proved to be a very difficult task. These concepts were devised in Japan hundreds of years before the arrival of Western philosophy and art theory – during the *Meiji* period (1868-1912) – and their manifestations extend from the purely tangible to the extremely abstract or sometimes even metaphysical.<sup>79</sup> In the first chapter of this thesis, I attempted to present the fundamental aesthetic components of *wabi-sabi* and provide a hint of the nature of *ma* through research and personal insight into aspects of Japanese culture (through traditional Japanese martial arts practice and *shakuhachi* performance). In the subsequent chapters, I explained how I perceived various manifestations of the concept of *ma* and the influence of the aesthetics of *wabi-sabi* during the composition of acoustic, electronic, and electroacoustic works for my portfolio. Moreover, I described my compositional ideas, creative tools and techniques, and finally, the difficulties of bringing elements of two different cultures together and the ways I devised to overcome them.

The work I have done during the course of my PhD studies convinced me that the concepts of *ma* and *wabi-sabi* can indeed be used as aesthetic and structural fundamentals for my compositional practice; a compositional practice rooted in the Western art music tradition and thus so far removed from the world of Japanese arts where these concepts have flourished. By doing that, I am able to explore asymmetrical temporal structures, grant the performers more expressive freedom, avoid totalising forms,<sup>80</sup> and ultimately, question the authority of the composer by creating works that invite (as much as possible) and not convey

---

<sup>79</sup> Koren, *Wabi-Sabi: Further Thoughts*, p. 45.

<sup>80</sup> Kramer, 'The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism', p. 16.

interpretations of meaning. For future research, I would like to attempt transferring my ideas and techniques used so far into writing for orchestra (with or without electronics). In my ensemble works, the free time format, the absence of a conductor, and the fact that all performers read from the main score allow the musicians a certain degree of flexibility and expressive freedom that gives the music a specific fluidity which was the effect I sought to achieve in these works. Is it possible to produce the same effect with a significantly larger group of musicians such as a symphonic orchestra? I have to overcome several obstacles in order to achieve such transference; for example, I assume it is extremely impractical or even impossible for all musicians to read from the same score and I highly doubt that such a large ensemble could operate without a conductor. It is therefore necessary to adjust my techniques or create new ones that would potentially allow me to generate the same effect with an orchestral work.

## References

- Adriaansz, Willem, 'A Japanese Procrustean Bed: A Study of the Development of Danmono', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 23 (1970) 26-60
- Bachelor, Justin, 'Izanagi and Izanami', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (2015),  
<<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Izanagi>> [accessed 5 June 2018]
- Burt, Peter, 'The Music of Tōru Takemitsu: Influences, Confluences, and Status' (doctoral thesis, Durham University, 1998)
- Castellengo, Michèle, Benoît Fabre, Catherine Dale, 'The Contemporary Transverse Flute and the Shakuhachi: Convergences', *Contemporary Music Review*, 8:2, (1993) 217-237
- Chenette, Jonathan L., 'The Concept of Ma and the Music of Takemitsu' (Grinnell: Grinnell College, 1985), in *Kokusai Shakuhachi Kenshukan, North America*  
<<http://www.kskna.com/media/articles>> [accessed 6 June 2018]
- Cronin, Tania, 'On Writing for the Shakuhachi: A Western Perspective', *Contemporary Music Review*, 8:2, (1993) 77-81
- Eaton, Joel, Eduardo Reck Miranda, 'On Mapping EEG Information into Music' in *Guide to Brain-Computer Music Interfacing*, ed. by Eduardo Reck Miranda and Julien Castet (London: Springer, 2014)
- Emmerson, Simon, 'Appropriation, Exchange, Understanding', in EMS: Electroacoustic Music Studies Network, Beijing 2006, <<http://www.ems-network.org/spip.php?article292>> [accessed 19 January 2019]

- Fritsch, Ingrid, 'A Comparison of Tozanryu and Kinkoryu Shakuhachi Arrangements for Sankyoku Gasso Made from Identical Originals.' *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 15 (1983): 14-30.
- Goda, Sachiyo, 'An Investigation into the Japanese Notion of "Ma": Practising Sculpture within Space-Time Dialogues', (doctoral thesis, Northumbria University, 2011)
- Hermann, Thomas, 'Taxonomy and definitions for Sonification and Auditory Display' in 14<sup>th</sup> International Conference for Auditory Display (2008)
- <<https://smartech.gatech.edu/handle/1853/49960>> [accessed 7 January 2019]
- Hirai, Naofusa, 'Shintō', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (1999),
- <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shinto#ref8482>> [accessed 5 June 2018]
- Hisashi, Noma, *The Kendo Reader*, Transl.: Nordes Kendoforbund (2003)
- <<http://www.osi.uio.no/kendo/pdf/Noma.pdf>> [accessed 03 August 2016]
- Komparu, Kunio, *The Noh Theatre: Principles and Perspectives*, (John Weatherhill Inc., 1983)
- Koren, Leonard, *Wabi-Sabi: Further Thoughts*, (California: Imperfect Publishing, 2005)
- Koren, Leonard, *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets and Philosophers*, (California: Imperfect Publishing, 1994)
- Kōshirō, Haga, 'The Wabi Aesthetic through the Ages', in *Japanese Aesthetics and Culture: A Reader*, ed. by Nancy G. Hume (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995)
- Kramer, Jonathan, D., 'The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism' in *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*, ed. by Judy Lochhead & Joseph Auner (London: Routledge, 2002)

- Kramer, Gregory and others, *Sonification Report: Status of the Field and Research Agenda* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, Faculty Publications, Department of Psychology, 2010) <<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/psychfacpub/444>> [accessed 7 January 2019]
- Lee, Riley, K., 'Yearning for the Bell: A Study of Transmission in the Shakuhachi Honkyoku Tradition' (doctoral thesis, University of Sydney, 1992)
- Lependorf, Jeffrey, 'Contemporary Notation for the Shakuhachi: A Primer for Composers', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 27. No. 2 (1989) 232-251
- Linder, Gunnar, J., 'Deconstructing Tradition in Japanese Music - A Study of Shakuhachi, Historical Authenticity and Transmission of Tradition' (doctoral thesis, Department of Oriental Languages, Stockholm University, 2012)
- Meyer, Matthew, *Hone-onna*, (2011) <<https://www.yokai.com>> [accessed 04 July 2018]
- Meyer, Matthew, *Iso-onna*, (2011) <<https://www.yokai.com>> [accessed 04 July 2018]
- Meyer, Matthew, *Kuchisake-onna*, (2011) <<https://www.yokai.com>> [accessed 04 July 2018]
- Meyer, Matthew, *Taka-onna*, (2011) <<https://www.yokai.com>> [accessed 04 July 2018]
- Nitschke, Günter, *From Shinto to Ando: Studies in Architectural Anthropology in Japan*, (London: Academic Editions, 1993)
- Nitschke, Günter, 'Ma: The Japanese Sense of "Place" in Old and New Architecture and Planning', *Architectural Design*, 3 (1966), 113-156
- Ono, Sokyō, William Woodard, *Shinto: The Kami Way* (North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing Company, 1962)
- Palaniappan, Ramaswamy, 'Electroencephalogram-based Brain-Computer Interface: An Introduction', in *Guide to Brain-Computer Music Interfacing*, ed. by Eduardo Reck Miranda and Julien Castet (London: Springer, 2014)

Parkes, Graham, 'Japanese Aesthetics', *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.),

<<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/japanese-aesthetics/>> [accessed 4 November 2017]

Pilgrim, Richard B., 'Intervals ("Ma") in Space and Time: Foundations for a Religio-Aesthetic Paradigm in Japan, *History of Religions*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 255-277

Richie, Donald, *A Tractate on Japanese Aesthetics*, (Berkeley, California: Stone Bridge Press, 2007)

Roads, Curtis, *Composing Electronic Music: A New Aesthetic*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Rutherford-Johnson, Tim, *Music After the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture Since 1989* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017)

Sansom, George, *A History of Japan 1334–1615*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961)

Simon, Amy, D., 'Western Extended Techniques in Traditional Japanese Wind Performance: Gagaku Kangen and Shakuhachi Honkyoku' (doctoral Thesis. York University, Toronto, Ontario, 2014)  
<<https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/28206>> [accessed 17 August 2017]

Stansbie, Adam, 'Beyond the Fixity Fallacy: Rethinking the Work-Concept in an Age of Electronic Music', *Music and Sonic Art: Practices and Theories*. (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017)

Stockhausen, Karlheinz, *Four Criteria of Electronic Music with Examples from Kontakte*, (Film of lecture at Oxford University: Kürten, DE Stockhausen Verlag, 1972)



Suzuki, D. T., *Zen Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Culture*, (Kyoto: The Eastern Buddhist Society, Otani Buddhist College, 1938)

Takemitsu, Tōru, *Confronting Silence: Selective Readings*, trans. and ed. by Yoshiko Kakudo and Glenn Glasow (Berkeley: Fallen Leaf press, 1995)

Takemitsu, Tōru, 'One Sound', trans. Hugh de Ferranti, *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 8, part 2 (1994) 3-4

Takemitsu, Tōru, *November Steps*, (New York, C.F. Peters Corporation, Edition Peters 66299, 1967)

Tsubaki, Andrew, A., 'Zeami and the Transition of the Concept of Yūgen: A Note on Japanese Aesthetics', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. Vol. XXX/1, (Fall 1971) 55-67

Wilson, Scott, and Jonty Harrison, 'Rethinking the BEAST: Recent Developments in Multichannel Composition at Birmingham ElectroAcoustic Sound Theatre', *Organised Sound*, 15.3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 239–250 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1355771810000312>>

Wishart, Trevor, *On Sonic Art*, (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996)





# Triptych

for solo shakuhachi

Stathis Kampylis

2018

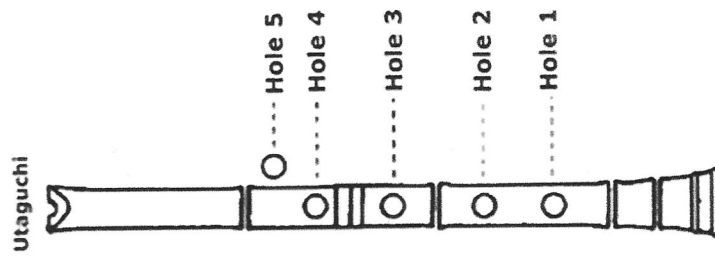


‘Triptych’ is a solo piece for *shakuhachi* consisting of three movements. Each movement is inspired by one of the three Imperial Regalia of Japan that are presented to the emperor by *Shintō* priests during his enthronement ceremony, confirming his divinity and legitimacy as the supreme ruler of Japan. The ceremony is not open to the public and the exact locations where each one of them are kept are not confirmed, hence the legendary status of these objects. The three Imperial Regalia of Japan consist of the sword *Kusanagi*, the mirror *Yata no Kagami*, and the jewel *Yasakani no Magatama* and they represent the three main virtues: valour, wisdom, and benevolence respectively.

The duration of a quarter note and also one centimetre on the manuscript paper (when proportional notation is used) equals approximately to one second. Nevertheless, the note and silent parts lengths, like in traditional *shakuhachi* notation, are merely a guide. I invite the performer not to be attached to the precise lengths but to make adjustments as s/he sees fit and natural to the performance of each phrase based on her/his breathing patterns.



## Shakuhachi Techniques







**Mura-iki:** Explosive breath attack.



**Atari:** These special grace notes are produced by rapidly opening and closing an already closed hole. The majority of them do not match equal temperament. The number of the hole to be articulated is placed in a parenthesis above the desired note.



**Yuri:** An intense, improvisatory vibrato/tremolo effect produced by a combined horizontal and vertical shake of the performer's head.



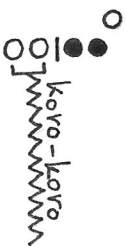
**Furi:** A rapid down-and-up head movement that bends down the note momentarily. The placement of a furi is indicated by an arrow placed above the staff.



**Nayashi:** A short glissando leading up to the main pitch.



**Kara-kara:** A timbral trill produced by repeatedly striking the first hole of the instrument. If a different hole is used for this effect, it is indicated by a number in a parenthesis. Where two holes are indicated, produce a rapid tremolo between them.



**Koro-koro:** Another type of timbral trill where the alternation of two holes create a multiphonic effect.

[A]



**Hole slaps:** Similar to key slaps, they are performed in three different positions A, B, and C:

[A]: Normal playing position.

[B]: Holding the instrument away from the mouth produces a pitch approximately a whole tone higher than the playing note.

[C]: Completely covering the mouthpiece with the chin produces a pitch approximately a minor seventh below the playing note.



**Vibrato:** The performer should apply normal amounts of vibrato where deemed appropriate. More expressive vibrato passages are indicated graphically with wavy lines.



Abrupt ending with an accent.



# TRIPTYCH

## STATIS KAMPYLIS

Meditative ♩ ≈ 60  
1cm ≈ 1"

Handwritten musical score for "STATIS KAMPYLIS". The score is written on five systems of five-line staves. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked "Meditative ♩ ≈ 60" and "1cm ≈ 1\"".

**System 1:** Features a melodic line with notes G4, A4, B4, C5 and a bass line with notes G3, F3, E3, D3. Dynamics include *ff*, *mp*, and *fp*. There are handwritten notes "atari (5)" and "kava-kava" with a wavy line.

**System 2:** Continues the melodic and bass lines with various articulations and dynamics (*f*, *mp*, *mf*). There are handwritten notes "kava-kava" and "mura-iki".

**System 3:** Includes a section marked "molto rit." with a key signature change to A major (F#4, C#5) and a repeat sign. There are handwritten notes "[A] → [B] → [A]" and "(2)".

**System 4:** Marked "A Tempo", it features a "furi" section with rapid sixteenth notes and a "kava-kava (2)" section with a wavy line. There are handwritten notes "furi" and "kava-kava (2)".

**System 5:** Features "Random atari fingerings" with a wavy line and a final "kava-kava" section. There are handwritten notes "Random atari fingerings" and "kava-kava".

Handwritten musical notation on a staff. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody begins with a half note F#4, followed by a whole note G#4. A wavy line indicates a sustained or vibrato effect. The notation continues with a half note A4, followed by a whole note B4. A wavy line indicates a sustained or vibrato effect. The notation ends with a half note C5, followed by a whole note D5. A wavy line indicates a sustained or vibrato effect.

Handwritten text: *kara-kara* (above the first wavy line), *Yari kara-kara* (above the second wavy line).

Handwritten musical notation on a staff. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a common time signature (C). The melody begins with a half note Bb4, followed by a whole note C5. A wavy line indicates a sustained or vibrato effect. The notation continues with a half note D5, followed by a whole note E5. A wavy line indicates a sustained or vibrato effect. The notation ends with a half note F5, followed by a whole note G5. A wavy line indicates a sustained or vibrato effect.

Handwritten text: *gradually open 2nd hole* (below the staff).

Handwritten musical notation on a staff. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a common time signature (C). The melody begins with a half note Bb4, followed by a whole note C5. A wavy line indicates a sustained or vibrato effect. The notation continues with a half note D5, followed by a whole note E5. A wavy line indicates a sustained or vibrato effect. The notation ends with a half note F5, followed by a whole note G5. A wavy line indicates a sustained or vibrato effect.

Handwritten text: *no vibr.* (below the staff).

Two empty musical staves, each consisting of five horizontal lines.

## II

Meditative  $\text{♩} \approx 60$   
 1 cm  $\approx$  1"

Staff 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). A wavy line labeled 'kara-kara' is written below the staff. A fermata is placed over the C5 note. A dynamic marking 'p' is at the beginning. A rehearsal mark (b) is at the end.

Staff 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). A wavy line labeled 'kara-kara' is written below the staff. Dynamics: 'unf' at the beginning, '> mf' above the C5 note. Rehearsal marks (a) and (4) are present.

Staff 3: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). A wavy line labeled 'slow timbre trill' is written below the staff. Dynamics: 'f' at the beginning, 'mf' and 'f' later. A rehearsal mark 'flz molto vibr.' is at the end.

Staff 4: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). A wavy line labeled 'link' is written below the staff. Dynamics: 'mp' and 'ff'. Rehearsal marks [A] and (b) are present.

Staff 5: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). A wavy line labeled 'kara-kara' is written below the staff. Dynamics: 'mp' and 'mf'. Rehearsal marks [B], [A] → [C], and (b) are present.

Handwritten musical score for a piece, likely a vocal or instrumental work, featuring multiple staves and dynamic markings.

The score is written on five staves. The first staff contains a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes (marked  $\text{mf}$ ), a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ), and a triplet of eighth notes (marked  $\text{mf}$ ). The second staff contains a melodic line with a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ), a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ), and a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ). The third staff contains a melodic line with a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ), a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ), and a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ). The fourth staff contains a melodic line with a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ), a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ), and a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ). The fifth staff contains a melodic line with a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ), a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ), and a half note (marked  $\text{mf}$ ).

Dynamic markings include  $\text{mf}$  (mezzo-forte),  $\text{f}$  (forte),  $\text{p}$  (piano), and  $\text{mp}$  (mezzo-piano). The score also includes a section labeled "kara-kara" with a wavy line, and a section labeled "koro-koro" with a wavy line. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a final note.

## III

Meditative  $\text{♩} = 60$   
 1 cm  $\approx$  1"

The musical score consists of five staves, each containing handwritten musical notation. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. The score is written on five-line staves with a treble clef. The first staff begins with a wavy line and a 'mf' marking. The second staff features a 'Kara-kara (2)' marking and a 'mf' marking. The third staff has a 'Kara-kara' marking and a 'mf' marking. The fourth staff has a '(5)' marking and a 'mf' marking. The fifth staff has a '(6)' marking and a 'mf' marking. The score is written in a handwritten style with various musical notations including notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.



Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various dynamics such as *mp*, *p*, *sf*, *p < sf*, and *f*. The piece concludes with a wavy line and the word "yuri" written below it.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various dynamics such as *mp* and *mf*. The piece concludes with a wavy line and the word "kate-karen" written below it.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various dynamics such as *mp* and *mf*. The piece concludes with a wavy line and the word "kate-karen" written below it.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various dynamics such as *mp* and *mf*. The piece concludes with a wavy line and the word "kate-karen" written below it.

Four empty musical staves.

# Yomi

for shakuhachi and electronics

Stathis Kampylis

2018



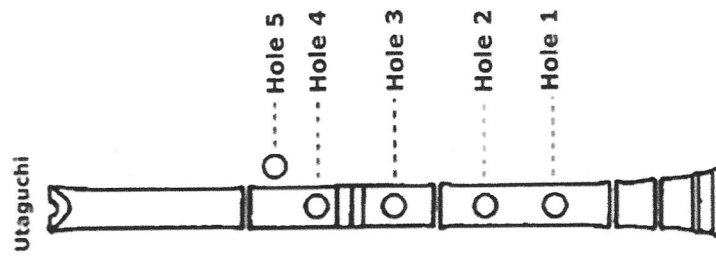
*Yomi* or *Yomi-no-kumi* is the Japanese word for the land of the dead as depicted in the *Shintō* religion and according to the legend it has geographical continuity with the world of the living with its entrance lying in the *Izumo* province. The work was inspired by Izanagi's journey to the underworld and his attempt to reunite with his deceased sister Izanami. The siblings Izanagi no Mikoto and Izanami no Mikoto are central deities in the Japanese creation myth and pantheon that through their union produced numerous other deities as well as the islands of Japan. While giving birth to the fire god Kagutsuchi, Izanami suffered fatal burns and went to *Yomi* with Izanagi following her to the land of darkness in an attempt to bring her back. Unfortunately, she had already consumed food in the underworld and according to the legend, once one has eaten in *Yomi* it is impossible to return to the land of the living. Once Izanagi saw the rotting, covered in maggots' body of his sister, he fled horrified and sealed the entrance of *Yomi* with a big rock.

In this work, the *shakuhachi* part represents Izanagi and his journey, while the electronics the echoes of the underworld as the spirits of the dead and the place itself react to the presence of the deity.

The duration of a quarter note and also one centimetre on the manuscript paper (when proportional notation is used) equals approximately to one second. Nevertheless, the note and silent parts lengths, like in traditional *shakuhachi* notation, are merely a guide. I invite the performer not to be attached to the precise lengths but to make adjustments as s/he sees fit and natural to the performance of each phrase based on her/his breathing patterns. The electronics part is split into nine sections. The performer can trigger each section with the help of a midi foot-controller or foot-switch using a software sampler. The starting point of each section is notated on the score using boxed numbers in ascending order. The *shakuhachi* performer stands in the middle of the stage. For the playback of the electronics track, a stereo set of speakers should be placed at the back of the stage facing the audience. Amplification must not be used for the *shakuhachi*.



## Shakuhachi Techniques





**Mura-iki:** Explosive breath attack.



**Atari:** These special grace notes are produced by rapidly opening and closing an already closed hole. The majority of them do not match equal temperament. The number of the hole to be articulated is placed in a parenthesis above the desired note.



**Yuri:** An intense, improvisatory vibrato/tremolo effect produced by a combined horizontal and vertical shake of the performer's head.



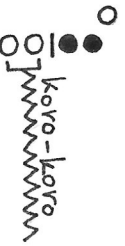
**Furi:** A rapid down-and-up head movement that bends down the note momentarily. The placement of a furi is indicated by an arrow placed above the staff.



**Nayashi:** A short glissando leading up to the main pitch.



**Kara-kara:** A timbral trill produced by repeatedly striking the first hole of the instrument. If a different hole is used for this effect, it is indicated by a number in a parenthesis. Where two holes are indicated, produce a rapid tremolo between them.



**Koro-koro:** Another type of timbral trill where the alternation of two holes create a multiphonic effect.

[A]



**Hole slaps:** Similar to key slaps, they are performed in three different positions A, B, and C:

[A]: Normal playing position.

[B]: Holding the instrument away from the mouth produces a pitch approximately a whole tone higher than the playing note.

[C]: Completely covering the mouthpiece with the chin produces a pitch approximately a minor seventh below the playing note.



**Vibrato:** The performer should apply normal amounts of vibrato where deemed appropriate. More expressive vibrato passages are indicated graphically with wavy lines.



Abrupt ending with an accent.







Handwritten musical score for a piece in 4/2 time. The score consists of five systems of staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation includes various musical symbols, dynamics, and performance instructions.

- System 1:** Starts with a boxed number "5". The first staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The second staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The third staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The fourth staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The fifth staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note.
- System 2:** Starts with a boxed number "6". The first staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The second staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The third staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The fourth staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The fifth staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note.
- System 3:** Starts with a boxed number "7". The first staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The second staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The third staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The fourth staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The fifth staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note.
- System 4:** Starts with a boxed number "8". The first staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The second staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The third staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The fourth staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The fifth staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note.
- System 5:** Starts with a boxed number "9". The first staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The second staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The third staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The fourth staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note. The fifth staff has a measure with a B-flat, a quarter note, and a half note.

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *f* (forte), *sf* (sforzando), and *pp* (pianissimo). Performance instructions include *Yuri*, *Allegro*, *normal vibrato*, and *normal*. The time signature is 4/2, and the key signature is one flat.

increase pressure  
to produce harmonics

46"

The image shows a musical score on five staves. The top staff is the only one with musical notation. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes a series of notes, some with slurs, and a '4' marking below a note. A '(4)(3)' annotation is written below the staff. The remaining four staves are empty.

Stathis Kampylis

# Daitoku-ji's tea room

for flute, clarinet, piano, cello, and double bass

2016



Daitoku-ji (the 'temple of Great Virtue') is a Buddhist temple, one of fourteen autonomous branches of the Rinzai school of Japanese Zen. It is located in Kita-ku, Kyoto, Japan. Daitoku-ji became closely linked to the master of the Japanese tea ceremony, Sen no Rikyū, who underwent Zen training there, and consequently to the realm of the Japanese tea cult (particularly the tradition of wabi-cha).

'Daitoku-ji's tea room' is a sonic walk through the gardens of the temple.

### **Instructions:**

- All performers read from the main score.
- Each system lasts approximately 17 seconds, if there is no fermata. A fermata may extend the total duration beyond 17 seconds.
- The performers are placed on various spots on stage (A relatively large stage would be ideal), as far as possible from each other, and not in a typical formation.
- Muted piano notes should be pitched but dull.





# Daitoku-ji's tea room

1

2016

Stathis Kampylis

*walking in the garden*

Transposing score

**Meditative** ♩ = 60 / **Each system c. 17 seconds**

wait until piano  
fades out completely

The musical score is arranged in five systems, each with a staff for a different instrument. The instruments are Flute, Clarinet in B $\flat$ , Piano, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The Piano part includes a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) marking and a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking. The Violoncello and Double Bass parts both feature a 'v.' (vibrato) marking and a 'sff' (sforzando) marking. The score is transposing and includes a tempo marking of 60 beats per minute. The overall mood is meditative. The score ends with an asterisk (\*) on the right side of the Piano staff.

Flute

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Piano

Violoncello

Double Bass

pizz.

*sff*

Ped.

*sff*

*sff*

\*

—→ breath tone

**Measure 2:**

- Fl.:** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Notes: G4 (quarter), A#4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). Dynamics: *p*. A slur covers the first four notes. A breath mark (arrow) is above the C5 note. A triplet of three eighth notes (G4, A#4, B4) is marked with a '3' above it.
- Cl.:** Treble clef, key signature of one flat (Bb). Notes: Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter). Dynamics: *p*. A slur covers the first four notes. A triplet of three eighth notes (Bb4, A4, G4) is marked with a '3' above it.
- Pno.:** Grand staff. Treble clef: Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). Bass clef: Notes: G3 (quarter), F3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (quarter). Dynamics: *pp*. A slur covers the first four notes. A triplet of three eighth notes (G3, F3, E3) is marked with a '3' above it. Text: "senza pedal".
- Vc.:** Bass clef. Notes: G2 (quarter), F2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter). Dynamics: *mp*. A slur covers the first four notes. A triplet of three eighth notes (G2, F2, E2) is marked with a '3' above it.

**Measure 3:**

- Fl.:** Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). Notes: G4 (quarter), A#4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). Dynamics: *mp*. A slur covers the first four notes. A triplet of three eighth notes (G4, A#4, B4) is marked with a '3' above it. Text: "flz" above the first note.
- Cl.:** Treble clef, key signature of one flat (Bb). Notes: Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter). Dynamics: *pp*. A slur covers the first four notes. A triplet of three eighth notes (Bb4, A4, G4) is marked with a '3' above it.
- Pno.:** Grand staff. Treble clef: Notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). Bass clef: Notes: G3 (quarter), F3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (quarter). Dynamics: *p*. A slur covers the first four notes. A triplet of three eighth notes (G3, F3, E3) is marked with a '3' above it. Text: "pizz." above the first note, "muted" above the second note, and "mf" above the third note.
- Vc.:** Bass clef. Notes: G2 (quarter), F2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter). Dynamics: *f*. A slur covers the first four notes. A triplet of three eighth notes (G2, F2, E2) is marked with a '3' above it. Text: "sul pont." above the first note, and "\*" above the second note.
- Db.:** Bass clef. Notes: G2 (quarter), F2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter). Dynamics: *p*. A slur covers the first four notes. A triplet of three eighth notes (G2, F2, E2) is marked with a '3' above it. Text: "pizz." above the first note.

Pno.

pizz.

*mp*

*Ped.*

Vc.

Db.

arco

*p*

*mp*

3

\*



A

Fl.

*sff*

key slap added to normal pitch

*f*

sim.

*f*

Cl.

*sff*

slow timbral trill

*tr*

*mf*

Pno.

ord.

*f*

3

pizz.

*sf*

*Ped.*

Fl.

Cl.

Pno.

Vc.

Db.

*f*

*mf*

*p*

pizz.

3

arco

*mf*

sul pont.

*mf*

\*

Pno.

Db.

*p*

muted

Ped.

sul pont.

*p*

Fl.

Pno.

breath tone

*mp*

\*

Cl. *mf* 3 *tr*

Pno. depress silently

Vc. *mf* *sf* 5

**B** *the pond*

Fl. *mf*

Cl. *mf* 3 *subito p*

Pno. *f* *p* *mp*

Cl. *mp*

Db. *f* *mp* *f* sul pont. ord.

Pno.

*mf*

Ped.

slow quarter-tone vibrato not in sync with the double bass

fast vib. ord.

Vc.

*p*

slow quarter-tone vibrato not in sync with the cello

Db.

*p*

**\* Cello & Double Bass: Increase the speed of your vibrato immediately for 2-3 sec. every time the pianist plays a chord, then gradually return to the original speed. Like a pebble hitting the surface of a pond.**

Fl.

key slap added to normal pitch

*f*

Pno.

*mf*

*mf*

fast vib. ord.

Vc.

fast vib. ord.

Db.

fast vib. ord.

lipped down  
from F

slow → fast

*tr*

*f*

*mp*

3

*mf*

\*

fast vib.

ord.

fast vib.

ord.

*entering the tea room*

**C**

L.H.

slap

similar

*ff*

*ff*

rapid gliss.  
on the strings

*sf*

*8vb*

*p*

*led.*

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*



Fl. *mp* *mf*

Pno. *mf* *f*

Db. *p*

Fl. *p* breath tone

Cl. *p* *f*

Fl. *mp* *fff*

Pno. muted *fff*

Vc. pizz. *mp* *fff*

Db. L.H. slap *fff*

Fl.

*mp*

Pno.

*mf* *ff*

Ped.

L.H. slap

Db.

*ff*

\*

This musical score is for measures 8 and 9. The Flute (Fl.) part begins in measure 8 with a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5, then descending to B4 and A4 in measure 9. The Piano (Pno.) part features a complex texture in measure 8 with multiple chords and moving lines in both hands, marked *mf* and *ff*. In measure 9, the piano part consists of sustained chords. The Double Bass (Db.) part has a single chord in measure 8, marked *ff*, and a sustained chord in measure 9. Performance instructions include a pedal point (Ped.) in the piano part and a left-hand slap (L.H. slap) in the double bass part in measure 8. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present for the flute in measure 8, and an asterisk (\*) is placed at the end of the double bass staff in measure 9.



Stathis Kampylis

# Yūgen

for flute, clarinet, piano, and cello

2017



*for my parents*



Yūgen suggests that which is beyond of what can be said, but it is not an allusion to another world. It is about this world, this experience.

It describes the subtle profundity of things.

**Instructions:**

- All performers read from the main score.
- Each system lasts approximately 20 seconds, if there is no fermata. A fermata may extend the total duration beyond 20 seconds.
- The performers are placed on various spots on stage (A relatively large stage would be ideal), as far as possible from each other, and not in a typical formation.
- Muted piano notes should be pitched but dull.





## Yūgen

2017

Transposing score

Stathis Kampylis

Meditative ♩ = 60 / Each system c. 20 seconds

Flute

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Piano

Violoncello

rit. . . . . A tempo → breath tone

**molto rit.**

*mf* 3 *ff* 3 *flz.*

*molto vib.* *no vib.*

*mf* *ff*

*arco behind the bridge* *f*

A tempo

musical score for a string quartet, page 3. The score is in 3/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and quintuplets, and dynamic markings such as *mf*, *fff*, *mp*, *f*, *sfz*, *p*, and *ppp*. The score is divided into two systems, each with five staves. The first system includes a "muted" section and a "pizz." (pizzicato) section. The second system includes a "pizz." section and a "pizz." section. The score is written for four string players, with the first two staves in treble clef and the last two in bass clef.

**A tempo**

**rit.** . . . . .

**fff** 3

**fff** 3

**p** muted

**ppp**

**fff** sul ponticello

**pp**

**pp**

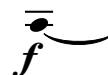
First system of a musical score, measures 1-4. The score is written for five staves: two single staves at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clef) below.   
 - Staff 1 (top): Treble clef, starts with a half note G4 (F#4 in key signature) and a half rest, marked *p* with a decrescendo hairpin.   
 - Staff 2 (top): Treble clef, starts with a half note G4 and a half rest, marked *p* with a decrescendo hairpin.   
 - Staff 3 (grand staff, treble): Treble clef, contains a whole note chord of G4 and Bb4, marked *ord.* and *pp*.   
 - Staff 4 (grand staff, bass): Bass clef, contains a whole note chord of G4 and Bb4, marked *pp*.   
 - Staff 5 (bottom): Bass clef, contains a whole note chord of G4 and Bb4, marked *mp*.   
 - Between Staff 4 and 5: The instruction "pizz." is written above a vertical line with a downward-pointing arrow to the staff. Below this, the instruction "col legno battuto" is written, with a dashed line connecting it to the staff.

Second system of a musical score, measures 5-8. The score is written for five staves: two single staves at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clef) below.   
 - Staff 1 (top): Treble clef, contains a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, Bb4) followed by a half note G4, marked *mp* with a decrescendo hairpin.   
 - Staff 2 (top): Treble clef, contains a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, Bb4) followed by a half note G4, marked *mp* with a decrescendo hairpin.   
 - Staff 3 (grand staff, treble): Treble clef, contains a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, Bb4) followed by a half note G4, marked *espress.* and *mf* with an accent (>) and a crescendo hairpin leading to *f*.   
 - Staff 4 (grand staff, bass): Bass clef, contains a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, Bb4) followed by a half note G4, marked *mp* with a decrescendo hairpin.   
 - Staff 5 (bottom): Bass clef, contains a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, Bb4) followed by a half note G4, marked *mp* with a decrescendo hairpin.   
 - Between Staff 4 and 5: The instruction "pizz." is written above a vertical line with a downward-pointing arrow to the staff. Below this, the instruction "ord." is written, with a dashed line connecting it to the staff.

key slaps with embouchure  
hole closed



Play the fundamental and subsequently touch the appropriate node on the string to produce the harmonic.



col legno battuto



humming

breath  
tone

ord.

breath  
tone



alternate between 2-3 slow timbral trills of variable rate



on the strings glissando

*pp*

*pp*

slow quarter-tone vibrato of variable rate

*pp*

First system of musical notation. The score is written for a piano (p) section. It features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a tremolo (tr) marking. The bass staff has a sustained note. The piano (p) marking is present. The system concludes with a fermata.

Second system of musical notation. The score is written for a piano (p) section. It features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a forte (f) marking. The bass staff has a piano (p) marking. The system concludes with a forte (f) marking. The piano (p) marking is present. The system concludes with a fermata.



flz → ord.

*mf* *f* *mp* *sf* *p*

arco

pizz.

8<sup>va</sup>

ord.

*p* *f* *ff*

slowly

muted

First system of a musical score, measures 1 and 2. The score is written for five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Violoncello/Double Bass, and two additional staves (likely for Piano and Harp). Measure 1 features a forte (*f*) dynamic in the Violin I part, a rapid glissando on the strings in the Violoncello/Double Bass part, and a sul ponticello instruction. Measure 2 features a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic in the Violoncello/Double Bass part, a pizzicato (*pizz.*) instruction, and a forte (*f*) dynamic in the Violoncello/Double Bass part.

Violin I: *f*

Violoncello/Double Bass: rapid glissando on the strings, *f*, sul ponticello, *mp*, *pizz.*, *f*

Second system of a musical score, measures 3 and 4. The score is written for five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Violoncello/Double Bass, and two additional staves (likely for Piano and Harp). Measure 3 features a piano (*p*) dynamic in the Violoncello/Double Bass part, a pizzicato (*pizz.*) instruction, and a piano (*p*) dynamic in the Violoncello/Double Bass part. Measure 4 features a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic in the Violoncello/Double Bass part, a muted instruction, and a piano (*p*) dynamic in the Violoncello/Double Bass part.

Violoncello/Double Bass: *pizz.*, *p*, *pp*, muted



**Stathis Kampylis**

# **Open Fields**

for shakuhachi, oboe, bass clarinet, piano, cello, and electronics

**2019**



In the Spring of 2018 I visited the former Nazi concentration and extermination camp of Auschwitz in Poland. The Auschwitz complex consisted of more than forty camps and sub camps with Auschwitz II-Birkenau being the largest and it was there where the majority of the victims of Auschwitz died. In the summer of 1944 with the Red Army approaching, the German leadership began the evacuation and liquidation of the camp as an effort to destroy any evidence of the crimes committed in Auschwitz. The majority of the barracks in Birkenau camp were burned down, with its crematorium and gas chambers being blown up. Nowadays, apart from the main gate, the monument to the victims, and a handful of barracks, Birkenau is an immense green field surrounded by dense forest. The only thing that disrupts this openness are the poles that used to hold the electric fences, and the chimneys, part of the heating system of the burned down barracks. I found myself mesmerised by this view and especially by the power of the negative space between those chimneys; something so empty and in a way beautiful used to enclose so much horror and despair. The way these empty spaces convey the negative beauty of disaster was the idea behind the piece 'Open Fields'.





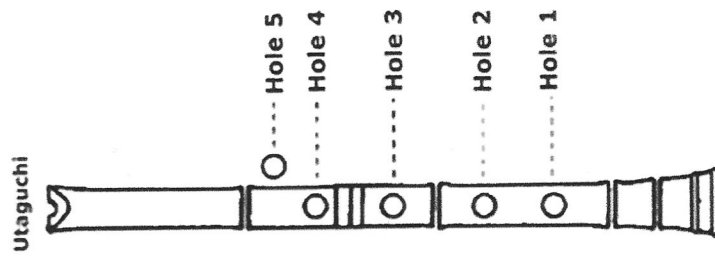
## **Instructions**

- All performers read from the main score.
- Each system lasts approximately 20 seconds, if there is no fermata. A fermata may extend the total duration beyond 20 seconds.
- Each electronic cue is playback of a pre-recorded soundfile. The start of each cue is shown by a boxed number above the staff. A duration line shows the extent of the cue through time. When the duration line is interrupted by a double slash, the soundfile duration is longer than the prevailing duration of the staff. Performers are to judge the completion of the cue playback before moving on.
- Amplification must not be used for the acoustic instruments. The electronics operator should adjust the level of each electronic cue in order for it to blend harmoniously with the dynamics of the ensemble at any given time.
- The performers are placed in various spots on stage (a relatively large stage would be ideal), as far as possible from each other, and not in a typical formation. For the playback of the electronics track, a stereo set of speakers should be installed at the back of the stage facing the audience. The electronics operator should be placed off stage, but being able to maintain visual contact with the performers.





## Shakuhachi Techniques

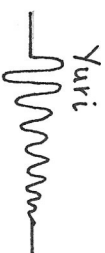




**Mura-iki:** Explosive breath attack.



**Atari:** These special grace notes are produced by rapidly opening and closing an already closed hole. The majority of them do not match equal temperament. The number of the hole to be articulated is placed in a parenthesis above the desired note.



**Yuri:** An intense, improvisatory vibrato/tremolo effect produced by a combined horizontal and vertical shake of the performer's head.



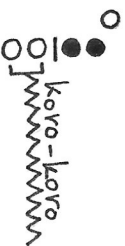
**Furi:** A rapid down-and-up head movement that bends down the note momentarily. The placement of a furi is indicated by an arrow placed above the staff.



**Nayashi:** A short glissando leading up to the main pitch.



**Kara-kara:** A timbral trill produced by repeatedly striking the first hole of the instrument. If a different hole is used for this effect, it is indicated by a number in a parenthesis. Where two holes are indicated, produce a rapid tremolo between them.



**Koro-koro:** Another type of timbral trill where the alternation of two holes create a multiphonic effect.

[A]



**Hole slaps:** Similar to key slaps, they are performed in three different positions A, B, and C:

[A]: Normal playing position.

[B]: Holding the instrument away from the mouth produces a pitch approximately a whole tone higher than the playing note.

[C]: Completely covering the mouthpiece with the chin produces a pitch approximately a minor seventh below the playing note.



**Vibrato:** The performer should apply normal amounts of vibrato where deemed appropriate. More expressive vibrato passages are indicated graphically with wavy lines.



Abrupt ending with an accent.



### Transposing score

**Meditative ♩ = 60 / Each system c. 20 seconds**

This musical score is for the piece "The Wind" by Dmitri Shostakovich. It is arranged for a chamber ensemble consisting of Shakuhachi, Oboe, Bass Clarinet in Bb, Piano, and Violoncello. The score is written in 2/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (Bb). The Shakuhachi part begins with a melodic line marked *p* (piano). The Oboe part enters with a melodic line marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The Bass Clarinet part enters with a melodic line marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The Piano part enters with a melodic line marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The Violoncello part enters with a melodic line marked *ppp* (pianissimo). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The piece concludes with a final chord marked *sf* (sforzando).



Shak.

Ob.

B. Cl.

Pno.

air sound → ord. 3 → air sound

begin when the electronics part has faded out completely

*p* *mf* *p* *p* *pp*



2

Score for Piano (Pno.) and Violoncello (Vc.)

**Measure 2:**

Piano (Pno.): Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), dynamics *p* (piano). The staff contains a whole note chord consisting of F#4 and A4.

Violoncello (Vc.): Bass clef, dynamics *pp* (pianissimo). The staff contains a whole note chord consisting of F#3 and A3, marked *pizz.* (pizzicato).

Repeat sign: Double bar line with two dots.

begin when the electronics  
part has faded out completely

3

Score for Oboe (Ob.), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), and Violoncello (Vc.)

**Measure 3:**

Oboe (Ob.): Treble clef, dynamics *mf* (mezzo-forte). The staff contains a whole note chord consisting of F#4 and A4.

Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.): Treble clef, key signature of one flat (Bb), dynamics *mf* (mezzo-forte). The staff contains a whole note chord consisting of Bb4 and D5.

Violoncello (Vc.): Bass clef, key signature of one flat (Bb), dynamics *mf* (mezzo-forte). The staff contains a whole note chord consisting of Bb3 and D4.

Annotations:

- A dashed line labeled "ord." (order) points from the Bass Clarinet staff to the Violoncello staff.
- A dashed line labeled "S.P." (Soprano Part) points from the Bass Clarinet staff to the Violoncello staff.

Repeat sign: Double bar line with two dots.

Shak.

Ob.

B. Cl.

Pno.

Vc.

begin when the electronics  
part has faded out completely

*mf* *sf*

*sf*

*sf*

*sf*

*f*

*8<sup>vb</sup>*

*8<sup>vb</sup>*

*pizz.*

*mp*

The musical score is written for five instruments: Shak. (Shakuhachi), Ob. (Oboe), B. Cl. (Bass Clarinet), Pno. (Piano), and Vc. (Violoncello). The Shak. staff is empty. The Ob. staff has a melodic line starting with a *mf* dynamic, followed by a crescendo to *sf*. The B. Cl. staff has a single note marked *sf* with an *8<sup>vb</sup>* (8va below) marking. The Pno. staff is marked with a brace and includes the instruction "begin when the electronics part has faded out completely". It features a *sf* dynamic and a *8<sup>vb</sup>* marking. The Vc. staff has a *pizz.* (pizzicato) marking and a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic.

Shak.

B. Cl.

This block contains the musical notation for the Shaker and B. Cl. parts. The Shaker staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line with a slur and a crescendo hairpin, marked *mf*. The B. Cl. staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It contains a triplet of eighth notes marked *p*, followed by a triplet of eighth notes marked *fu*, and then another triplet of eighth notes marked *p*. The triplet is indicated by a '3' above the notes. The staff ends with a double bar line.

Shak.

Vc.

4

This block contains the musical notation for the Shaker and Vc. parts. The Shaker staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It features a melodic line with a slur and a crescendo hairpin, marked *mf*. The Vc. staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. It features a melodic line with a slur and a crescendo hairpin, marked *f*. The staff ends with a double bar line. A box containing the number '4' is positioned above the Vc. staff.

5

S.T.-----|

Vc.

Violoncello (Vc.) musical notation. The staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a half note G2, followed by a quarter rest, then a half note F#2. A dynamic marking of *p* is present. The staff ends with a repeat sign. Above the staff, there is a measure with a whole note G2 and a repeat sign. To the right of the staff, there is a measure with a whole note G2 and a repeat sign.

Ob.

Oboe (Ob.) musical notation. The staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It begins with a half note Bb2, followed by a quarter note A2, then a half note G2. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present. The staff ends with a repeat sign. Above the staff, there is a measure with a whole note Bb2 and a repeat sign. To the right of the staff, there is a measure with a whole note Bb2 and a repeat sign.

Pno.

Piano (Pno.) musical notation. The staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a half note F#2, followed by a quarter note G2, then a half note A2. A dynamic marking of *pp* is present. The staff ends with a repeat sign. Above the staff, there is a measure with a whole note F#2 and a repeat sign. To the right of the staff, there is a measure with a whole note F#2 and a repeat sign.

8<sup>vb</sup>

pp

pizz.

Red.

6

Ob.

*mf*

Pno.

*sf*

7

B. Cl.

*mf*

*fp*

Shak. *mf* *mp* *mf* kara-kara *mf*

Shak. *f* (2) *mf*

Ob.

depress keys silently

Pno. *sff*

Vc. *mf* *f* *p* *sempre*

10

B. Cl.

Pno.

*d*

muted

Shak.

A musical staff with a treble clef. A box containing the number 8 is positioned above the staff. A double bar line is located below the staff.

Shak.

(2) kara-kara

*p*

Pno.

begin when the electronics  
part has faded out completely

*mf*

*p*

*p*

*p*

8<sup>vb</sup>

Play behind the bridge

Vc.

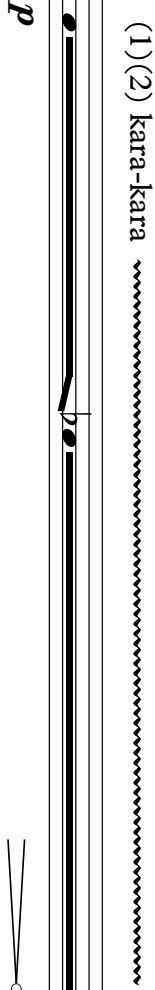
*pp*



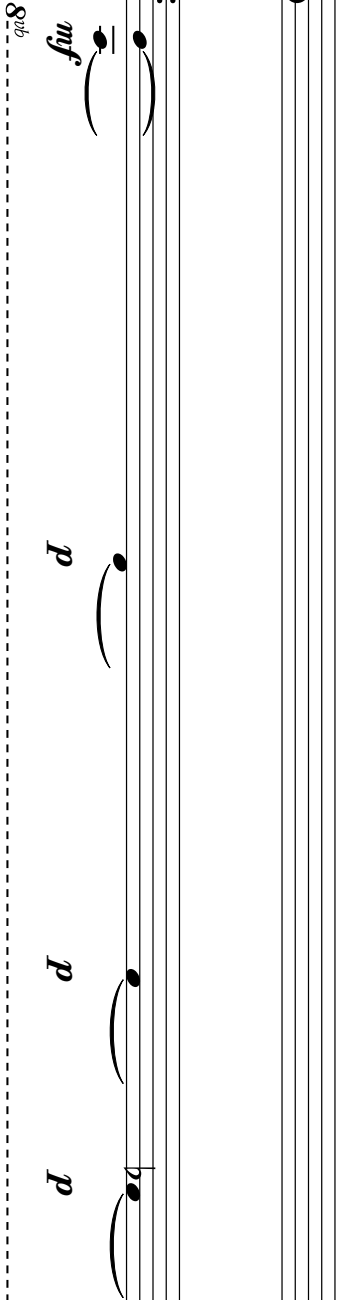
Shak.

(1)(2) kara-kara ~~~~~~

*p*



Pno.



*sim.*

Vc.

*pp*



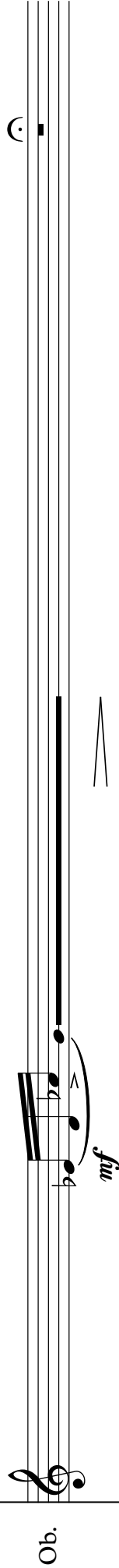
rapid timbral trills

Shak.

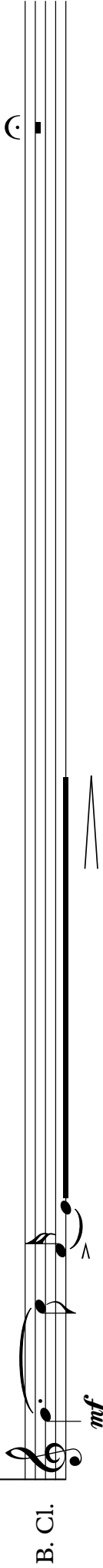


*p* *mf*

Ob.

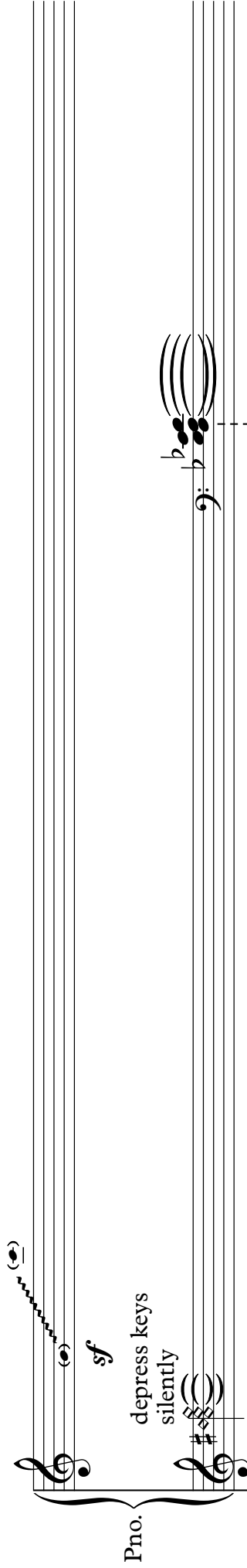


B. Cl.



rapid glissando  
on the strings

Pno.



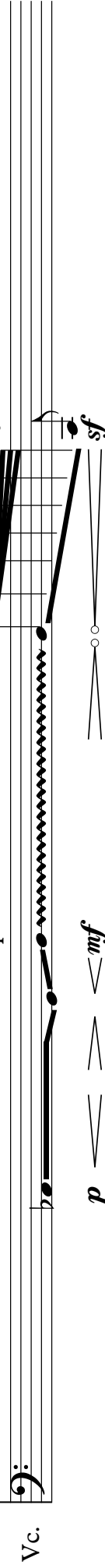
begin when the electronics  
part has faded out completely

fast circular bowing

random, slow quarter tone  
pitch fluctuations

col legno  
battuto

Vc.



*p* *mf*

Sul C

mute the string with your finger  
and then release gradually

muted → ord

*mp*

*sim.*

Pno.

Vc.

a la punta

*sim.*

*sim.*

*sim.*

*sim.*

Pno.

Vc.

*sim.*

*sim.*

*sim.*

10

Shak.

kara-kara

*mf*

Ob.

*mf*

B. Cl.

*mf*

Vc.

*mf*

S.P. 3

sul G

○ ●  
○ ●  
] koro-koro  
~~~~~

○ ●  
○ ●  
] ~~~~~

Shak.  
*p* \_\_\_\_\_ *f* \_\_\_\_\_

B. Cl.  
spectral sweep  
*f* *sim.*  
*sim.*  
*8vb* \_\_\_\_\_ *p* \_\_\_\_\_

Pno.  
tremolando produced  
by scratching the  
string with a coin.  
*f* *sim.* *b* *sim.* *sim.* *sim.*  
*p* \_\_\_\_\_

Shak.

Ob.

B. Cl.

Pno.

Vc.

11

//

*molto rit.* . . . . *A tempo*

Shak.

*ff* *p* *tr* *molto rit.* *A tempo* *mp* *sfp*

Ob.

*ff* *3* *3* *3* *3* *mp* *3* *mp*

B. Cl.

*ff* *3* *3* *3* *3* *mp* *5* *mp*

Pno.

*ff* *mf* *p* *mf* *5*

Vc.

*ff* *S.P.* *ord.* *p* *mf*

multiple (4) atari fingerings  
at random intervals

multiple (2) atari fingerings  
at random intervals

The musical score is written for five instruments: Shk. (Shakuhachi), Ob. (Oboe), B. Cl. (Bass Clarinet), Pno. (Piano), and Vc. (Violoncello). The score is divided into five systems, each corresponding to one of these instruments. The notation is complex, featuring many accidentals, slurs, and dynamic markings. The first system (Shk.) has a dynamic marking of *f*. The second system (Ob.) has a dynamic marking of *f*. The third system (B. Cl.) has a dynamic marking of *f*. The fourth system (Pno.) has a dynamic marking of *f*. The fifth system (Vc.) has a dynamic marking of *f*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings like *f*, *ff*, *mf*, and *ff mf*. There are also some unusual markings like *ff mf* and *ff* in the Vc. part. The score is written in a style that suggests it might be a transcription of a specific performance or a highly technical exercise.



Shak.      *molto vibrato*      *normal vibrato*      *fz* *molto vibrato*

Ob.      *mf* *5* *f*      *mf* *6*

B. Cl.      *mf* *3* *f*

Pno.      *f*      *f*

Vc.      *mf* *5* *f*      *mf* *f*      S.P.

slow quarter-tone  
pitch fluctuations

Shak.

Ob.

B. Cl.

Pno.

Red.

Vc.

mf

slap

tongue +

pizz.

ord.

ord.

mf

ord.

Ob.

*p* *mp* *p*

Pno.

*p* *pp* *pp*

*Red.*

play until you  
run out of breath

Shak.

*p* *p*

muted

Pno.

*p* *pp*